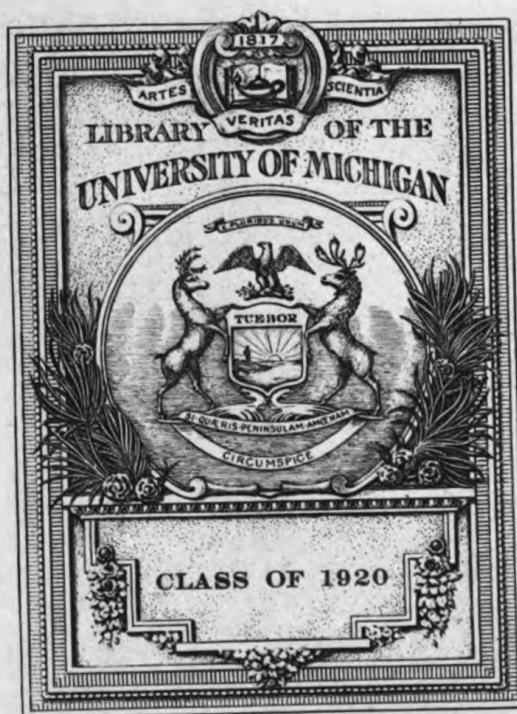


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# MONKEY WRENCH WOODS



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HISTORY OF THE 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
IN WORLD WAR II





NORTHERN FRANCE



RHINELAND



ARDENNES-ALSACE



CENTRAL EUROPE



# History of the 94th Infantry Division In World War II



*Edited By*  
LIEUTENANT LAURENCE G. BYRNES

WASHINGTON  
INFANTRY JOURNAL PRESS

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FIRST EDITION

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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IN HUMBLE GRATITUDE TO THOSE SOLDIERS  
OF THE 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY



# CONTENTS

DIVISION COMMANDER'S MESSAGE .....	xi
FOREWORD .....	xiii

## PART ONE: THE UNITED STATES

<i>Chapter 1:</i> IN THE BEGINNING .....	1
------------------------------------------	---

## PART TWO: THE UNITED KINGDOM

<i>Chapter 2:</i> AT SEA .....	10
<i>Chapter 3:</i> WILTSHIRE COUNTY .....	13

## PART THREE: FRANCE

<i>Chapter 4:</i> THE SITUATION .....	18
<i>Chapter 5:</i> CROSSING AND COMMITMENT .....	23
<i>Chapter 6:</i> THE POCKETS .....	27
<i>Chapter 7:</i> THE FFI .....	33
<i>Chapter 8:</i> OPERATIONS IN BRITTANY .....	38
<i>Chapter 9:</i> POW EXCHANGES .....	57
<i>Chapter 10:</i> THE BRETONS .....	65
<i>Chapter 11:</i> ADIEU .....	69

## PART FOUR: GERMANY: THE SAAR-MOSELLE TRIANGLE

<i>Chapter 12:</i> THE WESTERN FRONT .....	79
<i>Chapter 13:</i> TETTINGEN-BUTZDORF .....	84
<i>Chapter 14:</i> NENNIG-BERG-WIES .....	99
<i>Chapter 15:</i> TETTINGEN COUNTERATTACK .....	117
<i>Chapter 16:</i> ORSHOLZ .....	132
<i>Chapter 17:</i> THE 302D MOVES UP .....	139
<i>Chapter 18:</i> NENNIG COUNTERATTACK .....	149
<i>Chapter 19:</i> SINZ .....	159
<i>Chapter 20:</i> INTERIM .....	177
<i>Chapter 21:</i> CAMPHOLZ WOODS .....	185
<i>Chapter 22:</i> SINZ-BANNHOLZ ATTACK .....	196
<i>Chapter 23:</i> SECOND BANNHOLZ .....	214
<i>Chapter 24:</i> BANNHOLZ-ADENHOLZ .....	218
<i>Chapter 25:</i> PILLBOXES 151, 152, 153 .....	231
<i>Chapter 26:</i> SHOOT THE WORKS! .....	239



<i>Chapter 27: FEBRUARY 19, 1945: INITIAL OBJECTIVES.....</i>	244
<i>Chapter 28: FEBRUARY 19, 1945: SECOND OBJECTIVES.....</i>	254
<i>Chapter 29: REDUCTION OF THE TRIANGLE.....</i>	265

#### PART FIVE: GERMANY: ACROSS THE SAAR

<i>Chapter 30: THE BRIDGEHEAD .....</i>	283
<i>Chapter 31: THE SECOND DAY.....</i>	301
<i>Chapter 32: THE THIRD DAY .....</i>	309
<i>Chapter 33: THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DAYS.....</i>	317
<i>Chapter 34: THE FIGHT FOR THE HILLTOPS.....</i>	328
<i>Chapter 35: CT 376 .....</i>	340
<i>Chapter 36: LAMPADEN RIDGE .....</i>	365
<i>Chapter 37: RESTORING THE BRIDGEHEAD.....</i>	388

#### PART SIX: GERMANY: THE RACE TO THE RHINE

<i>Chapter 38: OUT OF THE BRIDGEHEAD.....</i>	400
<i>Chapter 39: PUSH TO THE EAST.....</i>	412
<i>Chapter 40: THE PURSUIT .....</i>	421
<i>Chapter 41: LUDWIGSHAFEN .....</i>	432

#### PART SEVEN: GERMANY: OCCUPATION

<i>Chapter 42: KREFELD .....</i>	449
<i>Chapter 43: DÜSSELDORF .....</i>	467

#### PART EIGHT: CZECHOSLOVAKIA

<i>Chapter 44: OCCUPATION .....</i>	489
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#### PART NINE: APPENDIX

DECORATIONS .....	505
BATTLE HONORS .....	511
ANTECEDENT HISTORY OF THE 94TH DIVISION.....	512
DIVISION COMMAND POSTS .....	515
DIVISION ASSIGNMENTS .....	516
ATTACHMENTS .....	516
REDEPLOYMENT INFORMATION AND INACTIVATION DATES.....	518
THE COMMANDERS .....	519
GLOSSARY .....	525

## MAPS

ROUTE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM TO BRITTANY.....	22
LORIENT POCKET .....	40
ST. NAZAIRE POCKET .....	41
DIVISION ZONE AND FRONT LINE, NOVEMBER 30, 1944.....	53
ROUTE FROM BRITTANY TO REIMS STAGING AREA.....	74
EXTENT OF VON RUNDSTEDT'S WINTER OFFENSIVE.....	78
ROUTE FROM REIMS STAGING AREA TO SIEGFRIED SWITCH LINE.....	80
SIEGFRIED SWITCH POSITION.....	90
COUNTERATTACK OF THE 416TH REPLACEMENT BATTALION.....	96
THE 11TH PANZER DIVISION'S FIRST COUNTERATTACK.....	122
THE 11TH PANZER DIVISION'S ATTACK OF JANUARY 20, 1945.....	142
THE 11TH PANZER DIVISION'S ATTACKS ON JANUARY 21 AND JANUARY 22 .....	150
THE DIVISION FRONT, JANUARY 31, 1945.....	178
THE 302D INFANTRY'S OPERATIONS IN CAMPHOLZ WOODS .....	186
TOPOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE SINZ AREA.....	198
ATTACK OF THE 2D BATTALION, 376TH, IN BANNHOLZ WOODS.....	220
FALL OF THE TRIANGLE, FEBRUARY 19-21, 1945.....	264
THE SAAR BRIDGEHEAD, FEBRUARY 22, 1945.....	290
THE SAAR BRIDGEHEAD, FEBRUARY 24-26, 1945 .....	322
THE SAAR BRIDGEHEAD, FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 2, 1945 .....	334
THE 376TH BRIDGEHEAD, FEBRUARY 22 TO MARCH 2, 1945.....	358
THE DIVISION FRONT PRIOR TO THE ATTACK OF THE 6TH SS MOUN- TAIN DIVISION .....	364
THE ATTACK AGAINST LAMPADEN RIDGE .....	376
THE ROUTE FROM THE SAAR BRIDGEHEAD TO THE RHINE.....	422
THE FALL OF LUDWIGSHAFEN.....	440
THE ROUTE FROM BAUMHOLDER TO WILlich.....	448
THE SITUATION AS OF APRIL 3, 1945.....	452
DÜSSELDORF OCCUPATION ZONE, APRIL 25, 1945.....	468
THE ROUTE FROM DÜSSELDORF TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA .....	488
CZECHOSLOVAKIAN OCCUPATION ZONE, JUNE 17, 1945.....	491
CZECHOSLOVAKIAN OCCUPATION ZONE, JUNE 17 TO SEPTEMBER 14, 1945 .....	492



*Major General Harry J. Malony, Commanding General of the 94th Infantry Division from September 15, 1942, to May 21, 1945, and his aide, Captain John C. Gehrig*



*To the Men of the 94th Infantry Division:*

Two years have passed since the occurrence of the events recorded in this history. They have been years during which most of us have been happy to forget many of the desperate encounters which we must re-live in these pages.

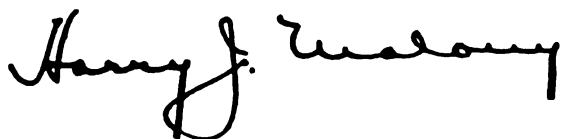
The deep sense of comradeship and devotion to a common cause for which many of our friends laid down their lives or suffered terrible wounds, are far too valuable in these troubled postwar days to be neglected. The qualities of manhood upon which they were based are the qualities our people always seek. You who led confidently in war must just as confidently lead in peace.

For the Division, I want to extend our thanks to the authors who have worked on this volume. Lieutenant Laurence G. Byrnes, who was unlucky enough to draw the job of putting it in its final form, has worked hard and diligently, and I hope this may be appreciated.

It may seem to many of you, that the volume concentrates on the accomplishments of the Infantry to a certain degree of exclusion of the supporting arms. Still you must remember that the accomplishments of the Cavalry, Antitank, Artillery, Engineer, Signal, Quartermaster, Ordnance, Medical and other units are measured in the progress of the Infantry.

I earnestly hope that your perusal of this volume will bring back to you the cat's eyes on the lights of vehicles through the rain on a muddy night; the stumbling effort of the ration details; the urgency of ammunition hauls; and as you worked forward to the line the tense alertness of the silent sentry at the guns; the whispered greeting of a tank driver digging in the shadow of his vehicle; and finally the infantry deep in their waterlogged foxholes, waiting for that hellish period just before dawn when man's vitality is lowest and yet his greatest effort is required.

And with all this may you say again "well done" in lasting satisfaction.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Harry J. Malony". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Harry" and last name "Malony" clearly legible.

HARRY J. MALONY  
Major General, U. S. Army  
Commanding 94th Infantry Division



## FOREWORD

FROM shortly after VE-Day until the present time, many men of the 94th Infantry Division, both commissioned and noncommissioned, have been associated in various capacities with the task of preparing this division history. Delays have been numerous—occasioned by redeployment, separation from service and the difficulty of finding someone, following the inactivation of the division, to carry the work to completion. Moreover, it is to be regretted that from the outset no accurate records were kept of the persons employed on this project nor of the extent of their individual contributions.

Major Samuel H. Hays, Assistant Division G-3, was appointed the first full time Division Historian on May 12, 1945, by Major General Harry J. Malony, who charged him with preparing a complete and comprehensive outline for a history of the 94th Division and with gathering the necessary documents and data from which such a book could be written. Realizing the enormity of his task, Major Hays sought and obtained the assistance of Major Carl H. Schofield and Captain Frederick D. Standish, II, who, along with Major Hays, were appointed members of the Division Historical Board. At this same time, Technician Fourth Grade Raymond O. Kraus was detailed as clerk to the Historical Board. Between mid-May and the end of July 1945, these officers drew up the original outline for the division history, gathered the required source material, compiled an exhaustive narrative on the enemy's actions within the Saar–Moselle Triangle and across the Saar River, in addition to writing an account of the capture of Tettingen–Butzdorf.

On July 31, 1945 the continuation of the project, or the actual writing of the manuscript, was turned over to Major Paul W. Marshall of the 319th Engineers, who was assigned the assistance of Major John N. Smith, Captain Thomas J. McIntyre, Lieutenant George F. Shaw, Lieutenant Robert Gordon, Lieutenant Harold N. Cheatham, and Lieutenant John N. Willett, all of whom were appointed to the Division Historical Board replacing the original members. In addition the following personnel were placed on duty with the new Historical Board: Sergeant William P. Williams, Technician Fourth Grade Peter A. Scacco, Technician Fourth Grade John L. Obal, Technician Fourth Grade Louis J. Persinger, and Technician Fifth Grade William A. Newman. Work began immediately, though it was not possible to assign a writer to each of the chapters outlined in the Hays' plan as the new Division Historian desired. The mass of records which had been gathered was studied exhaustively, while hundreds of interviews were conducted with combat personnel of the division, on all levels:

squad, platoon, company, battalion and regiment. It was during this work that redeployment struck hardest. When Major Marshall left the Historical Board in September to take command of the 319th Engineer Battalion, Major Smith assumed his responsibilities as Division Historian. Every possible effort was made to replace members of the historical force returned to the United States. However, it was a losing battle. During this period, the following were some of the many persons who contributed to the history: Captain Charles E. Wright, Lieutenant Joseph M. Levy, Lieutenant Raymond B. Thomas, Lieutenant George C. Walsh, Lieutenant Francis E. English and Lieutenant McNull. Gradually the personnel situation grew worse. By the time Major Smith was ready for redeployment, work had reached a standstill. There was a manuscript in rough draft, but no one to continue the work. Also, the division itself was preparing for return to the U. S.

In March of 1946, following the inactivation of the 94th Infantry Division, Lieutenant Pierce U. Wheatley, formerly of the 301st Infantry, became Division Historian. He spent several months working on the history, prior to his separation, but reported that he "was far from satisfied" with the manuscript when he returned to civilian life.

Again there was no one to continue the project. Finally, in September of 1946, the present historian took over. The form of the manuscript was rearranged; the text completely rewritten. Maps were prepared and numerous pictures obtained from the official files of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. A new appendix was drawn up and the decoration rosters contained therein were checked and rechecked against available records. A roster of the next of kin of men of the 94th Division killed in action was compiled, subsequent to which arrangements were made for distribution of free copies to these persons. Advertising, subscription, publication and distribution problems were worked out with the Infantry Journal Press. These and a multitude of other tasks, relative to the production of *The History of the 94th Infantry Division in World War II*, are responsible for the delay in the publication of this volume.

Unless otherwise specified, all photographs used in this history are by courtesy of the U. S. Army Signal Corps.

L.G.B.



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PART ONE

THE UNITED STATES

*Pursuant to authority contained in letter TAG  
AG 320.2 (5-26-42) MR-M-GN, . . . the 94th  
Infantry Division is activated this date.*

FROM DIVISION GENERAL ORDER  
NO. 1, SEPTEMBER 15, 1942.



## *Chapter 1: IN THE BEGINNING*

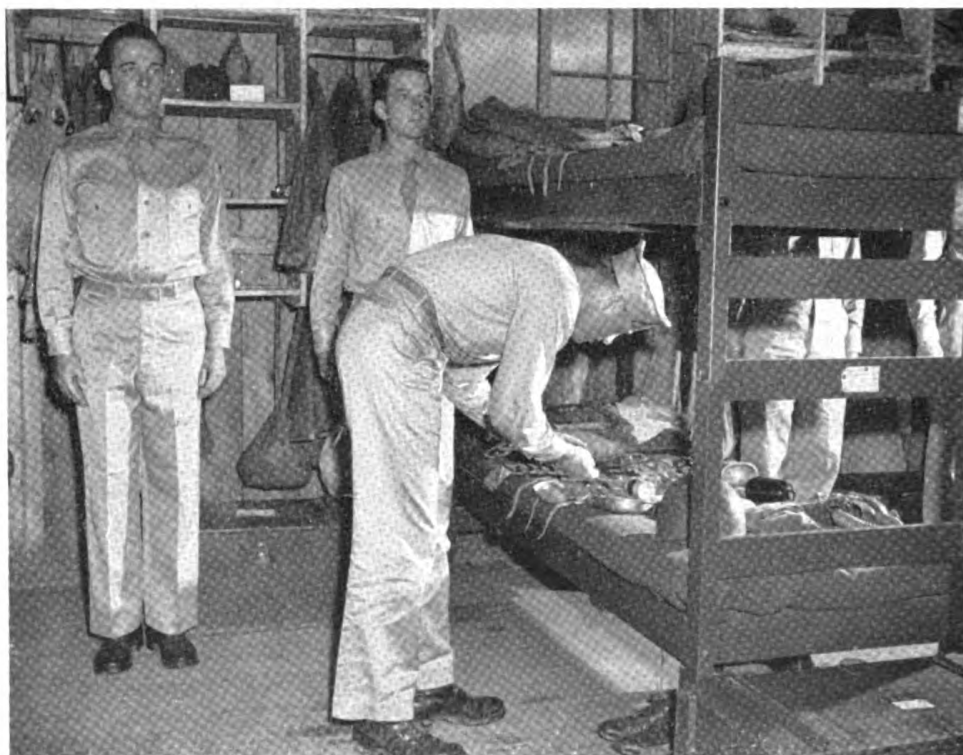
THE LEADING ELEMENTS of the 94th Infantry Division had landed on Utah Beach by September 8, 1944—D plus 94. The original command post was set up in the outskirts of the village of St. Marie-du-Mont, Normandy, and the Division prepared to execute whatever combat mission Headquarters US Ninth Army might assign. Behind the Division lay two solid years of training. Both units and individuals had been tested and retested; they were as letter-perfect and as battle-ready as training alone could make them. The prevailing mood was one of confidence—confidence mixed with the apprehension that comes to troops as yet untried in battle. Come what may, the Division felt that it would conduct itself in keeping with the traditions that it had acquired since activation.

It was on the 15th of September, 1942, that the 94th Infantry Division was activated. The place was Fort Custer, Michigan; the time 1630 hours. Major General Harry J. Malony, the Commanding General, received the Division colors from Colonel Arthur M. Payne (Retired), who had commanded the 376th Infantry Regiment during World War I. This simple yet impressive ceremony was attended by Brigadier General Harlan N. Hartness, Assistant Division Commander; Brigadier General Louis J. Fortier, Division Artillery Commander; the cadre of the Division and leading citizens of the nearby towns of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The entire enlisted cadre of the Division, and the officer cadre below regimental level, had been drawn from the 77th Infantry Division then stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. To this skeleton force had been added a sprinkling of ROTC lieutenants and Officer Candidate School graduates sufficient to give the 94th its required officer strength.

Soon after activation it became evident that the range facilities at Fort Custer were entirely inadequate. An extensive reconnaissance of the surrounding countryside revealed no solution to the problem. This, and the fact that the filler replacements needed to man the Division were not then available, led Second Army Headquarters to issue orders late in October for movement of the 94th to Camp Phillips, Kansas, the following month. An advance party consisting of twenty-seven officers and one hundred and twenty-one enlisted men departed from Fort Custer, for the new station, on the 1st of November, followed by the main body of the Division on the 15th. Three days later all personnel had closed at Camp Phillips.

Camp Phillips was a "theater of operations" type camp. Construction was of wood and tar-paper, and barracks were one story high. The camp-site was bleak, windswept and on the whole generally de-



*Saturday morning inspection*

pressing. Here the filler replacements were received during December, at the rate of approximately a thousand a day, between the 5th and the 20th of the month. Three days after Christmas, 1942, basic training began. In compliance with a directive from Second Army Headquarters, that all troops sing as they moved to and from training formations, the frosty plains of Kansas rang to the chant of "This Is The Army, Mr. Jones," as the 94th took form as a fighting unit. Days were short; training schedules crowded. Dawn, which seldom broke before 0800 hours, consistently found the new soldiers hard at work, despite the inclemency of the weather. Dusk fell early during the winter months; the men messed in the dark. Residence of the Division in Kansas lasted from November, 1942, until August, 1943. During this period units completed basic training, passed individual and unit training tests, conducted regimental combat team exercises, accomplished the required pre-maneuver firing tests and began the D (Division) Series Exercises.

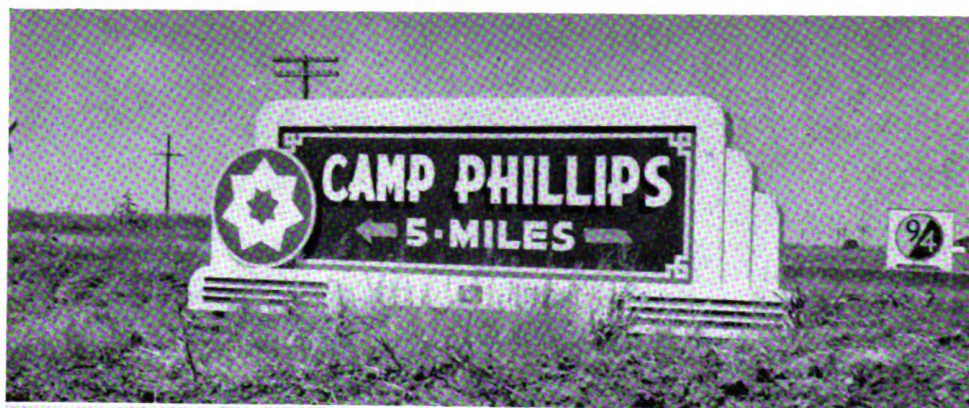
Numerous changes were made in the organization of the 94th Division during its stay at Phillips. Some of these were permanent, some temporary and others experimental. The outstanding innovation affected the Division Artillery whose firing batteries were reorganized to give



*In the black!*

each 105mm battalion six guns per battery, and the 155mm battalion five guns per battery. This brought the number of 105s in the Division to 54 and the total of 155s to 15. Although on occasion such organization had been used in combat during the current war, the 94th was selected by Army Ground Forces as the "guinea pig" to test thoroughly the proficiency of this proposed organization. (Later the Division was returned to its normal allocation of thirty-six 105s and twelve 155s distributed four per firing battery.) Another change affecting fire power was the activation of a cannon company within each infantry regiment. Officer cadres for these companies were composed of recent graduates of the Officer's Cannon School at Fort Benning, Georgia; enlisted cadres were drawn from the respective artillery battalions sup-





Remember?

porting each regiment and from personnel of the regiments themselves.

The Division's stay at Camp Phillips was characterized by extremes in weather. The winter of 1942 was one of the most severe Kansas had ever experienced. It impeded training and caused acute misery among the troops. Out-of-doors activities were conducted in zero and sub-zero weather. At times the firing ranges were used under near-blizzard conditions. The coming of spring and early summer brought other extremes. First, it was rain and glue-like mud, then oppressive heat and blinding dust storms. On several occasions, it became necessary to issue dust respirators and goggles to the guards to enable them to continue walking their posts.

With the coming of August, 1943, the 26th Infantry Division and the 94th traded Assistant Division Commanders, and Brigadier General Henry B. Cheadle replaced General Hartness, who proceeded to the Yankee Division.

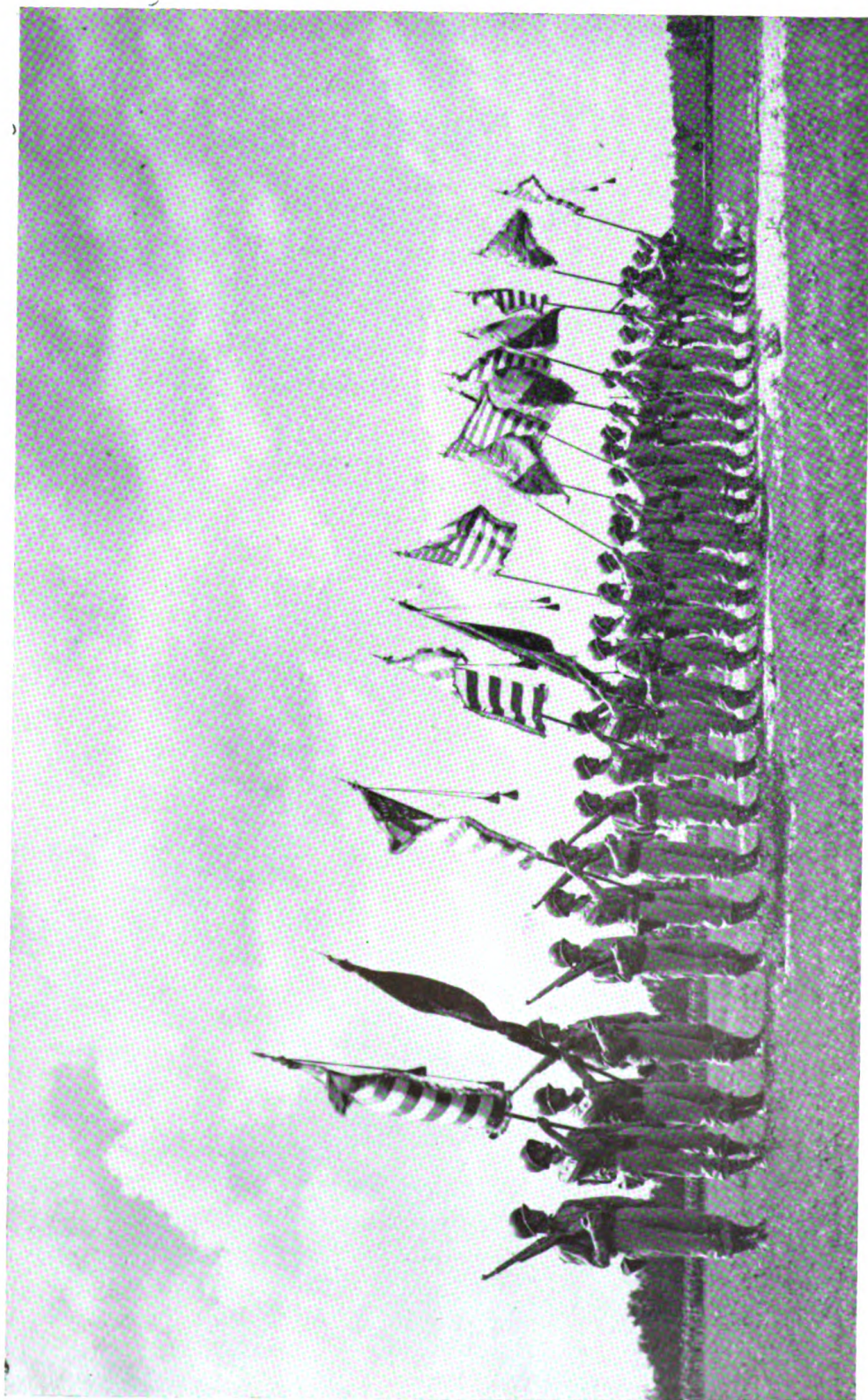
Late the same month, the Division began movement to the Second Army Maneuver Area in central Tennessee. Headquarters opened in Gallatin on the 30th of August and the following day the troops detrained at Portland. Almost immediately the Division was ordered to provide 1,500 overseas replacements. Despite this heavy loss in trained personnel, the 94th came through the eight operations of Phase III of the maneuver with flying colors. These activities kept the outfit busy until November rolled around.

On the 7th and 8th of November, the Division moved by motor from the maneuver area to Camp Forrest, near Tullahoma, Tennessee. This was a temporary station provided until the 84th Infantry Division could clear Camp McCain, Mississippi. While at Forrest, each infantry battalion transferred one hundred men to the 8th Infantry Division, which had been alerted for overseas movement. Many items of combat serviceable equipment were also handed over to the 8th Division.

Late in November the 94th moved by motor to its new home in Mississippi. The same tar-paper and wood construction that had been so uncomfortable in Kansas again was encountered. Post facilities were about the same as at Camp Phillips; however, the terrain offered a welcome relief from the treeless prairies where it was said, "there's nothing between us and Canada but barbed wire fences."

Post-maneuver training began as soon as units were settled on the new reservation. All types of exercises and problems were presented and the ammunition allowance for all arms was most liberal. Extended rifle-platoon maneuvers were held in Holly Springs National Forest,





*Division review at Camp McCain, Mississippi*

with units operating independently for six days at a time. Also, the Expert Infantryman Badge tests were conducted.

Inundation of the area surrounding Grenada, Mississippi, by flood waters of the Yalobusha River, led the local mayor, on March 29, 1944, to call on the 94th for help in evacuating marooned families. Division speedily answered this appeal by dispatching Company C, 319th Engineers and assault boats equipped with outboard motors. From an area approximately thirty-five miles square, bounded by the villages of Oxberry, Cascilla, Holcomb, Parsons and Philipp, the engineers rescued 153 persons between the 29th and 31st of the month.

The Governor of the State of Mississippi visited the 94th, on the 19th of April, accompanied by 140 honorary Mississippi colonels, all proudly wearing the "golden chickens" of their rank. For the benefit of the visitors, a field artillery demonstration was conducted by General Fortier's men. In addition, elements of the 302d Infantry crawled through a soggy infiltration course. During the latter demonstration, detonation of nitro-starch charges planted in water holes previously dug in the course, liberally showered most of the spectators with mud.

On May 5, 1944, the 94th Division was alerted for overseas service and the training week stepped up to a minimum of forty-eight hours so that all POM (Preparation for Overseas Movement) requirements could be met. TE-21 inspections were started and specialized training was pursued more intensely than before.

Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson visited the Division on May 26, 1944, and the following day, at a review staged in his honor, he attached streamers to the guidons of several infantry units, recognizing them as having qualified as Expert Infantry Companies. (In June the 376th Infantry qualified as the first Expert Infantry Regiment in the United States Army, while the Division itself won the distinction of being the first Expert Infantry Division.) During this visit of the Under Secretary of War, two special exercises were conducted: a night operation in which an infantry battalion and its supporting artillery demonstrated their defensive fires, and a dawn attack by an infantry regiment, with attached tanks, supported by accurate and powerful artillery fire. Later, in writing to General Malony, Mr. Patterson remarked, "My visit to the 94th Infantry Division . . . was a gratifying experience. You have an outstanding organization. I am proud of the honorary membership that was conferred upon me."

Movement of the main body of the Division to Camp Shanks, New York, the designated Port of Embarkation, began on July 23, 1944.





Top: "Squeeeze it off, Mr. Patterson." Bottom: Fire mission.

For five days troop-filled trains quietly pulled out of the yards at Camp McCain. By the 31st, all elements of the Division had closed at Shanks and final processing began. Hectic days followed. There were boat drills, inoculations, inspections of clothing and equipment, and required lectures to keep all personnel busy. On the morning of August 3, 1944 orders were received restricting the entire command to the reservation area. Beginning the following evening and continuing through the 5th, the troops of the 94th Division moved by rail to New York City where they loaded aboard the converted British luxury liner *Queen Elizabeth*. The *Queen* accommodated the entire main body of the Division plus several thousand British personnel. On the morning of the 6th at 0730 hours, the *Elizabeth* weighed anchor, sailed down the Hudson River and out into the Atlantic. Destination: Unknown!

PART TWO  
THE UNITED KINGDOM

*We have 105s and hand grenades,  
And our bayonets shine in the sun,  
And we won't be back to the Michigan tract  
Till the whole damn thing is done.*

FROM THE 94TH DIVISION SONG

## Chapter 2: AT SEA

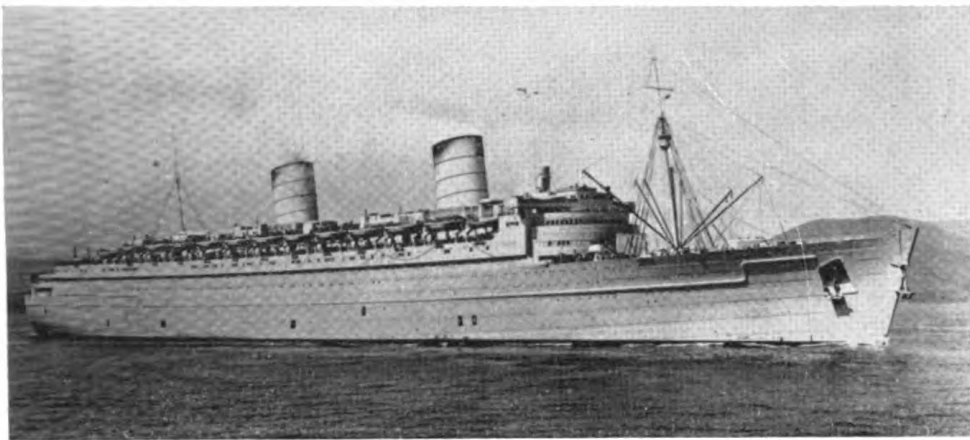
**E**VEN AS THE TUGS were nosing the *Queen Elizabeth* away from the wharf and into the channel of the Hudson, the inevitable "chain of command"<sup>1</sup> was being instituted below decks. Division headquarters operated from the once-beautiful main dining room of the ship. The vessel itself was divided into three parts: Red, White, and Blue. Each section had an orderly room and in these the three regimental headquarters were located. For the duration of the voyage only, all the units below regimental level were attached to the 301st, 302d or 376th Infantry. These units established their individual command posts in convenient locations throughout the ship and maintained contact with the regimental headquarters to which attached by either phone or runner. Existing telephone communications aboard the *Elizabeth* were excellent and used extensively. All headquarters operated around the clock, according to schedules that had been set up before sailing. Thus, it was possible for the division commander to contact any or all of his subordinate units, down to the lowest level, with a minimum of delay.

Aerial escort was provided the first day out, but with the coming of the 7th the *Queen* was on her own. For protection there were only speed and the deck guns. The latter were primarily for antiaircraft purposes and were manned by artillerymen of the 301st Field Artillery Battalion, which had been selected as "Gun Battalion" for the ship during the crossing. Under the supervision of British crew chiefs, the artillerymen practiced for hours each day: loading, tracking and simulating fire. On several occasions live rounds were expended for training purposes. At the completion of the crossing, Lieutenant Commander Bullen, RNVR, Gunnery Officer of the *Queen Elizabeth* commended the battalion in writing, and in addressing Lieutenant Colonel Samuel L. Morrow's men at the final muster on board, said: "This is only the second time in over two years of carrying troops across that I have commended the draft gun battalion. This is the finest draft gun battalion that I have ever seen."

Daily during the voyage two meals were served and due to the great number of persons on board, feeding was accomplished in relays. Each man had a mess card on which was indicated the dining hall he was to attend and the number of his shift: first, second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth. As the galleys were ready to feed each sitting, announcement was made over the ship's speaker system. The call "Number One Mess Cards, Form Your Lines!" would send the initial groups scurrying and leave the last shifts sulking at the prospect of the long wait ahead.

<sup>1</sup>For Glossary of Military Terms and Abbreviations see page 525.





The SS Queen Elizabeth (Courtesy Cunard White Star, Ltd.)

Throughout the voyage both the sea and weather remained calm. Only a few of the 94th proved themselves poor sailors and those who "fed the fishes" blamed their misery on the heat and the extremely crowded living conditions. The third day out the weather grew cooler and this did much to alleviate the discomfort of the crossing. In particular it made sleeping in the gangways (corridors) many decks below the water line a great deal more comfortable, though not more comforting. A physical-training program was carried out daily on the upper decks to relieve the monotony and to keep all personnel in fighting shape. At 1100 hours each day there was boat drill for all on board. Each man had an assigned station and was required to report there promptly. As a safety precaution, life jackets had to be worn or at least carried at all times. From the first day out it became strictly forbidden to throw any waste matter overboard, because a trail of debris might enable an enemy submarine to track the ship. The course was altered every two to four minutes and the wake of the vessel looked like the flight pattern of a bat. Each afternoon the "blackout hour" was announced for the coming evening. Sharply at the appointed time, all porthole covers were securely fastened and smoking on the open decks became forbidden. Violations of security were few and minor. These were dealt with summarily, for on one thoughtless act might hang the fate of some eighteen thousand troops and eighty-five thousand tons of shipping. The *Queen* was a lush target and everyone knew it.

Thousands upon thousands of paper-bound pocket-sized books had been placed on board the *Elizabeth* before she sailed. These were read and swapped throughout the voyage. To lay hands on a real popular, hot novel it was often necessary to obtain a priority and be placed on the waiting list.

One night a brightly lighted hospital ship was sighted, and the *Elizabeth* fled the scene. Being silhouetted against the lights of this other American vessel was the last thing the skipper or his passengers desired, in waters that were known to be the hunting ground of German submarines. On two occasions in the dead of night, the course was shifted so sharply men were hurled from their bunks. These sudden and abrupt changes of direction were followed by an increase in speed and excessive zig-zagging. When under forced-draft the *Queen* would quiver and vibrate as she took off like a frightened deer. There was never any explanation from the crew as to what had caused these hasty sprints, but the word "radar" was whispered back and forth with knowing winks.

Land was sighted the morning of the 11th and many Irishmen saw the home of their fathers for the first time. The *Elizabeth* sailed proudly into the North Channel; the antiaircraft guns swung smoothly as they practice-tracked the British planes that crossed and recrossed the course of the ship on their routine patrols. The men broke out binoculars and initially inspected the United Kingdom by courtesy of Bausch & Lomb. As the day progressed the *Queen Elizabeth* swung into the beautiful Firth of Clyde, proceeding into what seemed a fairy land. Glasses were no longer needed to study the tiny villages that dotted the shoreline. In turn, the absence of wooden construction, thatched roofs and the fresh greenness of the country side were discussed. Everything was trim, precise and well ordered. There was absolutely no sign of bomb damage.

In stately grandeur and at a leisurely pace, the *Queen* sailed up the Clyde to Greenock, Scotland, near Glasgow. There she anchored in mid-stream as there were no wharfing facilities capable of handling a ship of her tonnage.

### Chapter 3: WILTSHIRE COUNTY

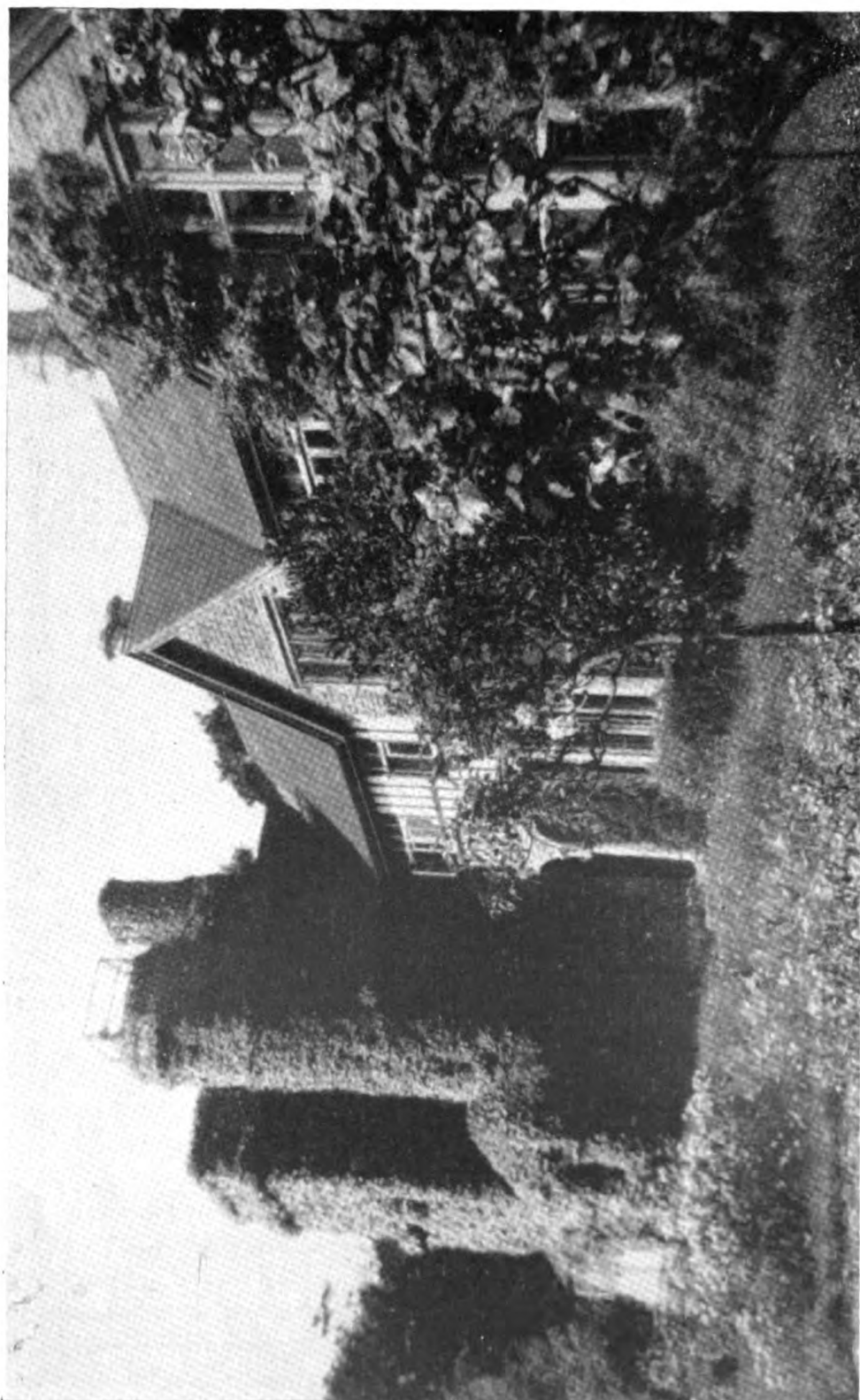
THE MORNING OF August 12, 1944, the troops of the 94th began debarking from the *Queen Elizabeth*. Full equipment was carried and the Scottish climate was mild enough to make ODs only slightly uncomfortable. Debarkation was accomplished by means of lighters which steamed alongside the *Queen* to receive troops from unloading-ports located at approximately the deck level of the lighters. Looking up from the decks of the smaller vessels, a striking impression of the tremendous size of the *Elizabeth* was obtained. New York to Scotland in less than six days! The Division was really "on the way."

On shore at Greenock, the 94th was received by personnel of the Transportation Corps. Units were divided into groups for entrainment and TC personnel supervised the loading. The whole affair was conducted in an orderly and efficient manner, with troops being disposed of as fast as they disembarked.

The English railway coaches were a great novelty and experts on the relative merits of American and British rolling stock sprang up like mushrooms. In the midst of these discussions, the American Red Cross appeared on the scene with hot coffee and doughnuts. Huge amounts were consumed to delay inroads on the K rations which had been issued each man prior to leaving the *Elizabeth*.

Debarkation was completed on the 13th and the Division moved to temporary stations in Wiltshire County in southern England. On the arrival of units at their destinations, they were met by members of the advance party who were on hand to act as guides and settle the troops in the billets that had been procured. The advance detachment reported that they had left the States on July 2, 1944 aboard the SS *John Ericsson*, a sister ship of the famous *Gripsholm*. Their crossing had taken ten days in convoy. In spots the weather had been bad and they were happy to see the docks of Liverpool. From there they moved by train to Stockton House, Codford St. Mary, England, where they remained until the 20th of July. The advance detachment then travelled to Chippenham where the process of drawing equipment for the Division began. Arrangements were made also, at this time, for the billeting of the 94th upon its arrival.

Division headquarters was established in Greenway Manor House at Chippenham on the 13th of August and the special unit companies—94th Signal, 94th Quartermaster, 94th Ordnance and the Reconnaissance Troop—located in the same town. The 301st Infantry and the Division Artillery with all its battalions were billeted in Trowbridge. The 302d Infantry set up at Grittleton, the 376th at Pinkney Park



*Greenway Manor House, Chippenham (Courtesy Miss L. D. Hess)*



*White Hart Inn, Castle Combe (Courtesy Miss L. D. Hess)*

and Sherston, while the 319th Medical Battalion and the 319th Engineers moved to billets at Bromham and Melksham, respectively.

Immediately upon arrival in southern England the 94th began making preparations for entry into the combat zone. As rapidly as vehicles were issued they were rendered combat serviceable by the addition of wire-cutting poles, erected from the front bumpers, and by the addition of racks to hold extra gasoline cans and equipment. Individual weapons were again fired for any last-minute corrections that might be necessary. Field pieces were drawn, calibrated and thoroughly inspected. All equipment which had become damaged or in any way defective was replaced from stock piles maintained in the UK for that purpose.

Special teams, including the following, were attached to the Division at this time: Air Support Group, Order of Battle Team, Civil Affairs Section, Photo Interpretation Team, Prisoner of War Interrogation Team and a Military Intelligence Interpretation Group. These were immediately integrated into the Division; time and again in the days that followed they proved their worth when the chips were down.

The area which the Division occupied was surrounded by numerous airfields. Night and day the constant drone of planes going to and returning from the Continent could be heard. Large formations of bombers, fighters and troop-carriers passing overhead brought the reality of war closer to the troops of the 94th. However, the men of the Division found time for recreation and sightseeing. All of the

local pubs were visited and acquaintances were made among the congenial English people. Each group found the other highly interesting and if the supply of "arf and arf" was short, at least conversation was unrationed. Over and over again the phrase "Now, back in the States," was heard. As the barriers of reserve melted away, the townspeople admitted they were living on short rations but hastened to explain how much better off they were than the bombed-out people in the cities. Bath, Bristol and London were visited by many members of the 94th who saw for the first time the damage aerial bombardment can do to a large city. In London, some of the troops actually came under enemy fire, for V-1s were landing with disgusting regularity. Stonehenge, a work of the ancient Druids, was also visited by some of the Division.

On August 30, 1944, an alert warning order was received from Headquarters US Ninth Army and the Division was advised that it would move to the Continent in the near future. The following day another order from the same source informed the 94th that it must be prepared to move on six hours' notice any time after 0001 hours, September 3, 1944. Movement actually began on September 3, 1944, the earliest date specified by higher headquarters. Units proceeded by motor to Southampton, Weymouth and Portland where the troops boarded Liberty ships and various other craft for the crossing of the English Channel. This journey to port from the temporary areas in Wiltshire County required three days for completion.

## PART THREE

### FRANCE

*I realize that your division has been in its present role for some time and I would like very much to move you to a more active sector. This question has come up several times, but it has been impractical to make any change.*

FROM A LETTER TO THE CG,  
94TH INFANTRY DIVISION,  
FROM LT. GEN. OMAR N.  
BRADLEY, CG, 12TH ARMY  
GROUP, NOVEMBER 14, 1944.

## *Chapter 4: THE SITUATION*

ON D PLUS 94, (September 8, 1944) the 94th Infantry Division opened its first combat command post in the outskirts of the village of St. Marie-du-Mont in Normandy, a few miles inland from Utah Beach. General Malony, the Division Commander, had landed on the 5th, accompanied by his G-4, Lieutenant Colonel John D. F. Phillips. The same day both officers proceeded to Headquarters Ninth Army, which had become operational that day when it assumed command of the VIII Corps of the Third Army, at Mi-Forêt. There, Lieutenant General William H. Simpson, whose troops were engaged in the reduction of Brest and in containing the enemy forces pocketed against the Brittany coast, personally assigned to General Malony the task of relieving the 6th Armored Division facing the German forces in and around Lorient. He gave specific instructions to the effect that the Division's mission was exclusively "containing." Under no circumstances was the 94th to attack.

In brief and by way of background, the series of events that had brought the 6th Armored Division to Lorient are worthy of note. After the fall of St. Lô, on July 18, 1944, the Third Army, commanded by Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., went into action. The Third, teamed with the First, had two goals: (1) to capture the port cities of Cherbourg, Brest, St. Nazaire, Lorient, Bordeaux and Nantes, thus relieving the pressure on the beachhead ports; (2) to hit the German forces in France as hard as possible, and, should the blow prove staggering, to pursue the enemy as long and far as possible. In the drive for the ports, General Patton's forces swept down the Normandy coast; seized Coutances and Granville. They next moved on Avranches and Pontorson, both of which fell to their advance. This opened the way into Brittany, across which the armor swept against slight and sporadic resistance. The VIII Corps pulled up in front of Brest, Lorient and St. Nazaire. Immediately preparations were made for a final, all-out assault on Brest with a force of three divisions, while the rest of the corps (the 83d Infantry and 6th Armored Divisions) spiked down the German forces holed up at the other two ports.

Meanwhile, XX Corps went after Rennes, Laval, Châteaubriant and Le Mans. After this the fighting in France moved eastward toward Chartres and Paris. Antwerp fell to the British Second Army on September 4, 1944 and its port facilities were found intact. On the 19th of the month, after a bloody and costly struggle, Brest was taken. Because of the costliness of this assault and the fact that Antwerp was in Allied hands, it was later decided to contain permanently the





*Utah Beach shortly after D-day*

enemy forces at Lorient and St. Nazaire rather than attempt the reduction of these cities as had originally been planned.

The lower half of the Biscay coast was liberated following the Seventh Army's drive up the Rhône Valley. This "back-door invasion" was the signal for the scattered *Maquis* bands to openly engage the enemy. The confusion caused by the successful onslaughts of the Allies presented a situation made to order for these guerrilla organizations; the *Maquis* capitalized to the fullest extent on their opportunities.

The final picture along the Brittany coast at the time the Division landed was this: Brest was about to fall, Lorient and St. Nazaire were completely in German hands with the enemy feverishly striving to perfect their defenses; Nantes was free but completely neutralized as a port, since the mouth of the Loire River on which it is located was in enemy hands; La Rochelle and Rochefort were German strong-points; and Royan blocked liberated Bordeaux as a port, in much the same manner that St. Nazaire rendered Nantes useless.

Having received his orders, the Division Commander had several immediate and pressing problems. He would have to expedite the landing of his troops who would soon be coming ashore piecemeal; he would have to reassemble them by units as quickly as possible and



*Only the wind and weather impeded the landing*

then dispatch them to Brittany where the 6th Armored Division was awaiting relief. However, before steps could be taken in this direction it was necessary to gain complete and first-hand knowledge of the situation existing on the front that the Division was about to take over. Toward this end, General Malony visited the command post of the armored division to be briefed on all matters pertaining to this first battle mission. Once cognizant of all aspects of the disposition of the force to be relieved, the situation and the terrain, the CG of the 94th returned post haste to Utah Beach, to assemble his command as they came ashore and start units moving toward Brittany.





## Chapter 5: CROSSING AND COMMITMENT

THE WATERS off Utah Beach presented a scene of desolation and destruction as the 94th began debarkation. Visible were the wrecks of more landing craft and Liberty ships than a man would care to count. Masts, funnels, bows and sterns were thrust up from the waves at all manner of grotesque angles. Among and beyond the naval wreckage were LSTs, LCIs, Liberty ships, freighters and tankers waiting to unload. Plying from ship to ship and from shore to ship were various smaller craft: power boats, DUKWs, Rhinos and LCTs. Overhead were scores of barrage balloons—awkward, gray shapes floating high above the decks of the vessels to which they were attached by steel cables. Their purpose was to discourage low-level attack by enemy aircraft and this they did well.

On Utah Beach itself was more debris of all types. Moreover, the sea had spewed bits and pieces of smaller military equipage above high water mark and these were gradually being ground into the sand. Dug into the dunes behind the beach and heavily camouflaged were the pillboxes, gun emplacements, firing pits, communication trenches, dugouts and shelters that had formed the German beach defenses. Long-barreled 88s still protruded from their firing apertures; panoramic range cards painted around the circumference of the open-type emplacements had not yet begun to fade from weathering. Barbed wire was strung with wasteful abandon and everywhere were *Achtung Minen* signs, complete with skull and crossbones.

Landing craft rammed themselves against the beach, discharged their cargoes and wiggled back into deep water. Men and machines milled about everywhere. Utah Beach seemed a place of utter confusion. It was. But, out of the confusion order was being wrought. The situation was not as much a "can of worms" as it appeared.

Behind the beach, on the road to St. Marie-du-Mont was more evidence of the fury of the fight that had taken place three months earlier. Buildings were for the most part shattered and shell-torn. Shell craters were everywhere and the roads were liberally pockmarked in addition to being practically worn out. Telephone wires by the score were strung in the ditches paralleling the roads and American engineer signs bearing the legend "Mines Cleared to Shoulder" were much in evidence. St. Marie-du-Mont was highly interesting to the men of the 94th, merely because it was the first of many such towns. However, it was not until the truck columns rolled through Carentan, Coutances and Avranches that the effects of total war were really seen. St. Marie had been hit but not pulverized.

Division headquarters had been among the first elements to move.

It motored to Southampton and there boarded the Liberty ship *Lucian B. Maxwell*, on September 4, 1944. The following day this vessel moved to the mouth of the harbor and there joined a large convoy of U.S. troop and supply ships. On the morning of the 7th, the convoy sailed into the Channel and after an uneventful crossing dropped anchor off Utah Beach at 2030 hours the same day. Later that evening the port commander directed the skipper of the *Maxwell* to discharge personnel and cargo the following day. This was accomplished. On September 8, 1944 Division headquarters came ashore and went into operation in the vicinity of St. Marie.

Movement orders for displacing the division from Great Britain to the Continent had set up the following order of march: Combat Team 301, Combat Team 302 and Combat Team 376. The CTs moved out in the order indicated; however, bad weather disrupted plans for sailing and debarkation.

The 301st Infantry, quartered in Trowbridge, departed on September 4, 1944 for Southampton under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Donald Hardin, the regimental executive officer, since Colonel Roy N. Hagerty, the regimental commander, was moving with Division Headquarters. Foot elements of the regiment boarded the *Neutralia* and the *Crossbow* the evening of the 5th after a 24-hour delay and began landings on Utah Beach on the 6th. The regimental command post was set up in the outskirts of St. Marie-du-Mont. On the 8th Colonel Hagerty came ashore and after a conference with General Malony left for the 6th Armored Division headquarters at Plouay, France. Also on the 8th, the 301st pulled stakes at St. Marie and headed for Lorient. An overnight bivouac was made en route, in the vicinity of Rennes. On the 9th the regiment moved into the line beginning the relief of the 6th Armored Division.

The 302d Infantry began movement to Southampton on September 5, 1944, when the motorized elements moved to the port. By the 6th, all vehicles and their accompanying personnel had been loaded. Foot troops followed on the 7th and debarked on Utah Beach the following day, unloading ahead of the motor elements. The foot troops then marched to the vicinity of Vierville, the beachhead location of the regimental command post. On the 9th, the motor elements of the regiment began unloading, but due to rough water off the beach a week passed before all personnel were ashore. On the 10th an advance party from the 302d left for Lorient; two days later, the regiment minus the 2d and 3d Battalions departed for Rennes, where it was expected it would reassemble. Colonel Earle A. Johnson's regi-

mental headquarters, 1st Battalion and Antitank Company moved to the vicinity of Plouay on the 15th where the command post opened at 1800 hours. The 2d and 3d Battalions completed their movement on the 16th and rejoined the regiment. This same afternoon all three battalions were committed.

The 376th, which had sailed from the United Kingdom on the 7th of September, began landing on the 9th. Orders for movement to Lorient had to be countermanded when the St. Nazaire pocket was added to the Division's containing mission and the relief of elements of the 83d Division was directed. The regiment's march objective was shifted accordingly. Colonel Harold H. McClune's men moved to Rennes and from there to the new front.

Because of bad weather the Division Artillery also experienced difficulty in crossing the Channel. The 301st Field Artillery Battalion reached Weymouth on the 3d of September and loaded in LSTs during the 4th and 5th. Debarkation began on Utah Beach the next day. For three days the battalion bivouacked in the vicinity of the beach; on the 9th it moved to Rennes. The following day the 301st Field Artillery headed for forward positions in the Pont Scorff area. These were reached by nightfall.

The 356th Field Artillery Battalion departed from Trowbridge on September 4, 1944. It crossed the Channel without incident and on the 10th moved to Rennes where it remained overnight. The morning of the 11th the 356th moved to positions south of Plouay. Position-area surveys were completed and wire communications necessary for registration were laid before sundown. The battalion's first mission was to reinforce the fires of the 128th Field Artillery of the 6th Armored Division, this battalion being in direct support of the 1st Battalion, 301st Infantry.

The 919th Field Artillery Battalion departed from Trowbridge on September 5, 1944, reaching the coast of Normandy on the 8th. This battalion, the direct support artillery of the 376th Infantry, upon debarkation headed for Vigneux, Loire Inférieure (St. Nazaire sector) and went into bivouac there on the 14th. The battalion officially rejoined the combat team when it relieved the 908th Field Artillery Battalion of the 83d Division on September 17, 1944. Battery A took positions to the north of Vigneux, in the center of the sector of 3d Battalion, 376th, while Batteries B and C went into position to the south of Vigneux supporting the 1st Battalion of this regiment.

The 390th Field Artillery Battalion also left Trowbridge on the 5th of September. After a 24-hour delay at Portland, the unit sailed



for France on the morning of the 7th. The LSTs reached Utah Beach at 0330 hours on the 8th and began unloading at 0730 hours. Following debarkation, the battalion moved to Beaumont and on the 9th trucked to Rennes for an overnight stay. The next day reconnaissance parties reconnoitered position areas and observation post locations as the main body closed at Plouay. Positions were occupied on the 12th; communications were established and registration completed by 1915 hours of the same day.

## Chapter 6: THE POCKETS

IN REGARD TO TERRAIN the pockets of Lorient and St. Nazaire were almost exact opposites. At Lorient, where the enemy held some one hundred square miles of French territory, the mountains ran practically down to the seacoast and the area was heavily forested in parts. Three rivers, the Leita, the Scorff and the Blavet flowed southward into the Bay of Biscay, from the American lines toward the German positions. Here the observation favored the Division, but numerous hills and ridges within the enemy-held area provided the Germans with a fair degree of visibility. Time and again, the enemy brought forward mobile artillery to the high ground behind his lines, employing it with telling effect on the American positions.

At St. Nazaire, the 680 square miles of German-dominated terrain was flat, swampy and intermittently forested. Due to the extremely level ground, a rise of a few dozen feet would often prove a deciding observation factor. Unlike Lorient, where the opposing lines crossed the rivers in the area, at St. Nazaire existing water barriers outlined the greater part of the perimeter of the German pocket. On the north the German and American lines paralleled the opposite banks of the Vilaine River and the Brest-Nantes Canal. To the west and south the enemy was protected by the Bay of Biscay. Only on the east was there no watercourse to separate the opposing lines. St. Nazaire itself was located directly south of La Grande Brière (the Great Swamp) on the bank of the Loire River at its mouth.

Hedgerows, which were ever present in Normandy and Brittany, dotted the landscape in both sectors. The German soldier, by reason of long training and experience, had become a past master at the defense of these walls of living vegetation. But, in due time, the men of the 94th learned to play the game. There were numerous stories of opposing patrols passing each other on opposite sides of the same hedgerow, only to discover the other's presence and engage in a fire fight facing and firing in the direction of friendly lines. At St. Nazaire, there was an additional menace as many of the roads paralleled the hedgerows, making ambush a constant threat.

The relative stability of the front-line positions led to skillful and continuous camouflage by both sides. As autumn progressed, German vehicles and weapons, which were painted a light tan mottled with soft greens and reds, blended perfectly with the natural vegetation surrounding them. Carefully prepared positions were extremely difficult to locate and more than one patrol encountered rude surprises.

During the Division's stay in Brittany the rainfall was extremely heavy and the ground became muddy or sodden. Often, turf that



Typical camouflaged dugout on "The Forgotten Front"

appeared capable of supporting the weight of an artillery prime-mover would bog a jeep. During prolonged rainy spells constant use reduced many stretches of the Division's road net to quagmires. As a result and by way of preventive maintenance, available rock and gravel piles took a beating. In many places it became necessary to corduroy roads and trails to provide the necessary flotation for even the lightest vehicles. While it was possible, by continuous road repairs, to keep transportation moving, rain and mud made life generally miserable.

When the 94th began its containing mission at Lorient, it faced an enemy garrison that was later accurately estimated at between 21,000 and 25,000 troops. At St. Nazaire, the enemy could muster a strength of approximately 35,000 men. In both pockets, roughly one half the enemy troops were infantry that ranged in training and morale from good to poor. The remainder of both forces was composed of a variety of personnel. There were artillerymen, both field and sea coast, *Kriegsmarine*, naval personnel, *Luftwaffe* and *Luftwaffe* cadets, paratroopers, service troops, labor units and even a few bicycle companies. Some Russian troops, allied with the Germans, were used initially as front line elements. However, their tendency to desert, sometimes liquidating their German officers before doing so, soon led to their withdrawal to rear areas where they were disarmed and employed as labor units. Initially, the caliber of the German defenders taken as a whole was slightly below par. But, considering the peculiar order

of battle represented within the pockets this was understandable. Some units consisted only of commanders and their staffs while others were overstrength by reason of the number of stragglers that had joined them. During the months that the Division opposed the German garrisons in the Channel ports, intensive training on the part of the enemy raised the combat efficiency of most front-line elements to an excellent status. Morale and efficiency of rear-echelon personnel, however, remained poor throughout.

Highest ranking German in Brittany after the fall of Brest was *General der Artillerie* (Lieutenant General) Wilhelm Fahrmbacher who assumed command of the infantry troops in and around Lorient. The general had his headquarters in the city of Lorient in a huge bunker reportedly capable of housing 1,000 men. This fortification was reported to be suspended on giant springs which acted as shock absorbers when the area was under bombardment. During October of 1944, rumors leaking out of the pocket hinted the headquarters was soon to be moved as the bunker rocked excessively.

Other high ranking Germans in the Lorient pocket were *Konteradmiral* (Rear Admiral) Kaehler, Colonel Haversang and Colonel Kaumann. Admiral Kaehler reportedly came from Brest by submarine prior to the fall of that city. Colonel Haversang had commanded the 859th Regiment of the 265th Infantry Division, remnants of which were within the pocket. (Other elements of this division were located at St. Nazaire.) In charge of Fortress Lorient itself was Colonel Kaumann and early rumors stated this officer might consider surrender. Later it was learned the colonel was hospitalized and recovering from wounds. Possibly there was a connection since no surrender overtures were forthcoming.

*Generalmajor* (Brigadier General) Junck, who was believed to have been the CG of the 265th Infantry Division, took command of all German forces in the St. Nazaire pocket when it was formed in August of 1944. Formerly this officer had been connected with the *Luftwaffe*, commanding the 3d Parachute Division, one of Germany's crack units. Also at St. Nazaire were *Konteradmiral* Mirew, *Generalmajor* Huenten and Colonel Kaeseberg. The admiral, who was a fanatic determined to fight to the last man, was in command of Naval District Loire. General Huenten had command of Fortress St. Nazaire while Colonel Kaeseberg, formerly a regimental commander in the 275th Infantry Division, had charge of all enemy defenses south of the Loire River.

At Lorient there were approximately 500 pieces of enemy artillery available for action. Three hundred of these were in stationary posi-

tions, but the remaining two hundred were capable of a high degree of mobility. These weapons ranged in caliber from 20mm antiaircraft guns to 340mm coast defense weapons that had been turned around to hurl their 700-pound "flying barracks bags" against the troops of the 94th. Enemy artillery in the St. Nazaire sector came to a slightly greater total. There were an estimated 525 pieces available; calibers ranged up to and including 340mms. Ammunition for all types of artillery was plentiful and the enemy used it unsparingly.

All indications pointed to the fact that a long stand would be made in both areas. Consistently, the Germans attempted to hold as much farming land as possible, and made extensive use of obstacles, mines and demolitions. On the OPL, positions were well constructed, skillfully camouflaged and alert. Ammunition for all infantry weapons was most plentiful, though there were indications of shortages in other classes of supplies. Food, for instance, was a critical item, and transportation, especially motor, was limited. In addition to the areas within the pockets, the Germans held the islands of Ré, Groix and Belle in the Bay of Biscay. Belle Isle was of particular value to the enemy for food crops were grown on its farm land and it supplied great quantities of potable water. Moreover, it served as a prisoner of war enclosure, hospital center, rest area and antiaircraft strongpoint.

In regard to active defense against Allied air power, the pocketed enemy never relented. This was forcibly called to the attention of certain personnel of the AAF who were shot down over the port cities, for their mistakes in believing these centers were in friendly hands. In addition to the AA defenses of the "Flak Cities," as Lorient and St. Nazaire came to be called, Quiberon Peninsula jutting into the Bay of Biscay between the two pockets was one long line of antiaircraft guns. La Rochelle, Royan and Pointe de Gavre, outside the Division area to the south, also contributed their share to the antiaircraft menace.

The Germans were credited with radio, air, and submarine communication with the *Vaterland*. Mail planes were frequently identified over the Division area and on two occasions dropped mail sacks fell within the American lines, giving the G-2 and order-of-battle personnel of the 94th valuable information. Substantiated reports also hinted that the pockets were receiving aid from Spain, via submarine. During the stay of the Division in Brittany, changes in command personnel at the besieged ports conclusively proved that submarines were being used successfully. It was also soon evident that the two pockets were in communication with each other by means of surface craft that plied the waters between these ports.



*Lieutenant Colonel Albert B. Turner, Jr., Division Signal Officer, asks road directions of Monsieur DeRoux, Stationmaster of Messac*

Within the division zone communications were an ever-pressing problem and the 94th Signal Company laid over 2,000 miles of wire in attempting a solution. Extensive use was made by the signalmen of French phone facilities and captured German matériel. One hundred drop switchboards left behind by the enemy when he withdrew into the pockets were especially useful. Strictest security measures necessitated by the static condition of the front led both the artillery and infantry regiments to lay abnormal amounts of wire, in an effort to minimize radio communication. Artillery wire sections laid an average of eighty miles of wire per battalion to provide telephone channels from the numerous forward OPs to fire direction centers, command posts and batteries. Use of radio was reduced to vital operational messages, contact with liaison planes and communication with 12th Army Group.

Liaison officers were employed extensively and assisted materially in expediting the rapid flow of information and orders throughout the entire command. Because of the complexity of command channels, almost every lieutenant could expect to do liaison service at one time or another. Battalions, regiments, sectors and Division Headquarters maintained liaison sections to keep in constant contact and completely oriented on the current situation. French forces under Division control

also resorted to liaison officers, partly because of their lack of other adequate means of communication and partly because of the chance for errors, due to language difficulties, in the transmission of vital messages.

Because of the vastly extended front and the miscellaneous French forces operating within the Division zone, the supply situation was an extremely difficult one. During the four months the Division remained in Brittany, 1,847,888 rations and 1,357,108 gallons of gasoline were drawn by the 94th and its attachments. To keep pace with the demands placed upon it, it was necessary for the 94th Quartermaster Company to establish two separate railheads. One of these was located at Baud to supply the Lorient sector and the other at Messac to handle the needs of the forces in front of St. Nazaire. At both installations use was made of prisoner of war labor. To supply the attached cavalry units stretched along the Loire River, special arrangements were made with the supply depots located at Le Mans. During the period from September 10 to December 31, 1944, 6,287 long tons of ammunition, a good deal of which was hauled on organic transportation, was placed in the ASP. Of this amount, 3,487 long tons were expended against the enemy. Throughout this entire period, unit distribution was made to the regiments thereby releasing all their transportation for tactical use.

To provide adequate medical support for both sectors, the 319th Medical Battalion split its clearing company. One station went into operation about a mile north of Nozay, in the St. Nazaire area, while the second, serving the Lorient sector, was set up near Pont Scorff. In spite of the handicap of divided forces, efficient service was maintained at all times. The battalion headquarters worked in conjunction with the installation at Nozay, occupying a château in the vicinity of the St. Nazaire sector's clearing station.



## Chapter 7: THE FFI

WHEN GENERAL MALONY'S 94th Infantry Division took over the task of containing the German forces in the ports of Lorient and St. Nazaire, it was not operating alone. Within the Division area were many thousands of French fighting men, members of the FFI (French Forces of the Interior, also called *Maquis*) or of the FTP (French Partisans). For the most part these troops were patriots although there were some who had jumped on the bandwagon after the Americans assumed control in Brittany. These French elements were all poorly organized and ill equipped. There was little evidence of a definite chain of command and tables of organization and equipment were non-existent. Battalions varied in strength from two hundred to eighteen hundred men, while arms and equipment consisted of items dropped by the Allies and articles seized from the enemy. There was no standard uniform or badge of recognition. The troops lacked training and discipline; units were loosely knit and jealous of their integrity.

A great deal of friction existed among the various factions of the French military. Not only did the FFI resent the higher pay earned by the soldiers of the communist FTP, but they disagreed with their political beliefs. The FTP, which was a much smaller organization than the *Maquis*, paid its soldiers approximately three times the wages of the FFI, and, more important still, paid them with greater regularity. Furthermore, both the FFI and the FTP looked down on the French regular army troops who later came into the Division area. The regulars were referred to by the guerrillas as "moth-ball" soldiers because of the fact that they had gone into hiding during the occupation and had not participated extensively in the sabotage and underground activities conducted by the other two organizations.

Gradually, however, as the political situation in France began to crystallize, General Charles de Gaulle came into his own and took steps to revitalize and reorganize the military. The French disarmed the FTP units, then withdrew them from the lines. Efforts were made also to inject a core of experienced regular army personnel into the *Maquis* units and, in the final phase, units of the FFI were absorbed by the new French regular army. These changes were spread over a period of months and it was not until early in 1945 that the French Army and not the FFI became the dominant factor on the scene in western France.

Prior to D-day, one of the best sources of supply possessed by the underground forces in France was the prearranged drops made by Allied aircraft, to keep the resistance groups functioning. But, with

the conquest of Normandy and Brittany, this aid to the French ceased. It was then the problem of the Allied ground forces and the French government to keep these troops supplied. The French countryside, ravaged by years of occupation, its rail and communications facilities disrupted by the retreating enemy and the normal attrition of battle, could do little toward solving the problem. On the other hand, American forces were racing across France and the US First and Third Armies were constantly clamoring for more and more ammunition, fuel and food. All these items had to come through the beachhead ports, which were taxed to the utmost. As a result, supplies for the French underground groups rated only a low priority. Initially, units of the 94th attempted to supply the French forces working side by side with them, but this soon proved an overwhelming task. Also, it tended to defeat the Division's long-range program for making the French self-sustaining.

Captain Samuel H. Hays, Assistant G-3, and Captain John W. Schaub, Assistant G-4, undertook the task of working out tables of organization and equipment for the French guerrilla units soon after they came under division control. The result of their efforts provided a sound basis for requisitioning purposes, introduced an outline for uniformity of weapons and personnel within the battalions and enabled the Division to proceed with plans for supplementing their equipment. Arms and equipment captured by the Allies during the Brittany campaign were released to the Division by higher headquarters and these were turned over to the French. Through American supply channels 2,344 rifles, 1,817 carbines, 283 machine pistols, twenty-four mortars, nineteen 105mm howitzers, five 155mm howitzers and nineteen other artillery pieces ranging in caliber from 20mm AA guns to 88mm high-velocity weapons were issued, along with ammunition for all these pieces. This improved French fire power greatly. Communications Zone was able to procure for the Division several thousand French rifles and these were also distributed to the FFI. By exchanging rifles between particular French battalions a degree of uniformity was introduced which eliminated to some extent the serious ammunition supply problem caused by the fact that units often had Czech, Dutch, Belgian, Russian, British, French and American weapons in a single command. Two artillery batteries, *Batterie LeRoy* armed with four 105mm German Field Howitzers and *Batterie Finistère* equipped with three modified German Schneider 155mm Howitzers, were trained and supervised by the men of the 356th Field Artillery Battalion. Two more French batteries were organized and trained by a cadre from the

919th Field Artillery. Armament for the latter batteries was American 3-inch guns mounted on makeshift turntables for additional traverse.

In mid-October of 1944, the French set up headquarters in Vannes and Nantes to act as higher echelons for the subordinate French units in the immediate zone of the 94th. All questions and problems were referred through these channels in an effort to unify requests and to determine approximate needs, which were extremely difficult to compute due to the lack of administrative organization and experienced supply personnel.

On the 23d of December, the French opened their own railheads at Redon and Nantes. At the same time, plans were under way for the opening of a third railhead to supply their troops at Lorient; the latter was put into operation after the 94th departed for the Western Front.

Initially, coordination with the French proved extremely difficult for it was necessary to depend upon a policy of mutual cooperation which was not always successful. In all fairness it must be admitted that this was due in large part to the lack of familiarity on the part of *Maquis* staff officers with US Army methods. Internal politics and the barrier of language also hindered mutual advancement.

On September 29, 1944, General Simpson visited the Division at Châteaubriant, and discussed at length with General Malony the existing situation in front of the Channel ports. Together they reviewed past operations and the army commander informed the CG of the 94th that original plans had not contemplated the Division's being assigned this mission. He further stated that there would, in all likelihood, be new developments for the 94th by the middle of November. During the visit of the army commander, General Malony asked for additional equipment for the French and was informed again that the needs of the First and Third Armies were paramount; FFI battalions were on a very low priority. General Simpson expressed his gratification with the Division's conduct but announced with regret that when the Ninth Army moved to the Western Front the 94th would remain behind passing to the control of 12th Army Group.

On October 2, 1944, Colonel Earl C. Bergquist, Division Chief of Staff, held a conference at Châteaubriant which was attended by the ranking French leaders. This conference, the first of many, opened the 94th Division's campaign to sponsor better relations between the two nationalities and improve the fighting efficiency of the French. Methods of operation, troop dispositions and chain of command were discussed, in addition to the ever-pressing problem of supply for the FFI battal-

ions. As a result of this meeting, the Division made delivery on the 6th of the month of the initial shipment of rations and gasoline agreed upon at the conference. Beginning on that date, daily allocation to the *Maquis* was 10,000 rations and 600 gallons of gasoline.

A short time later, Captain Le Flock of the French Navy presented himself at the Division command post in Châteaubriant to announce that the French Navy would begin operations shortly from a headquarters in Vannes. Available ships, it was learned, were little more than armed fishing smacks but they later proved a most valuable aid in spying on German shipping and keeping Division G-2 posted on enemy activities on and around the islands in the Bay of Biscay.

Early in October the French Air Squadron, *Groupe Patrie*, commanded by Major Lapios, came under control of the 94th Division. This unit, equipped with eleven A-24 dive bombers, was used primarily for reconnaissance missions. However, during the first month with the 94th, *Groupe Patrie* flew 84 sorties, dropped 30,900 pounds of bombs and on several occasions strafed enemy positions.

On October 6, 1944, a Colonel Michelin appeared at Division Headquarters announcing that he was the new commander of the IV Region of the French Forces of the Interior and that his command post was located at Rennes. In conference with General Malony he discussed an extensive reorganization of his forces which he would undertake in the near future. Following this visit, Colonel Michelin informed Division by letter that he had also assumed control of the FFI forces at St. Nazaire. Shortly thereafter, General Hary, who had been commanding the IV Region, and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Payen, called on the Division Commander to report that Colonel Michelin was acting without proper orders or authority and that General Hary continued as CG of the region in question.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Colonel Felix, who had commanded the FFI at St. Nazaire, proceeded to Paris after being relieved by Michelin, and reported to General de Gaulle. This resulted in his being promoted to the rank of colonel and officially confirmed as commander of the French forces in front of St. Nazaire. With a new staff, Colonel Felix returned to Brittany on the 17th of October and resumed operations. The French picture was further clarified on the 20th, possibly as a result of Colonel Felix's visit to General de Gaulle, when General de Larminat visited the division command post to pay his respects. General de Larminat had been placed in over-all command of the French forces employed between Bordeaux and Lorient and was to operate under the direction of 6th Army Group as French Forces of the West.

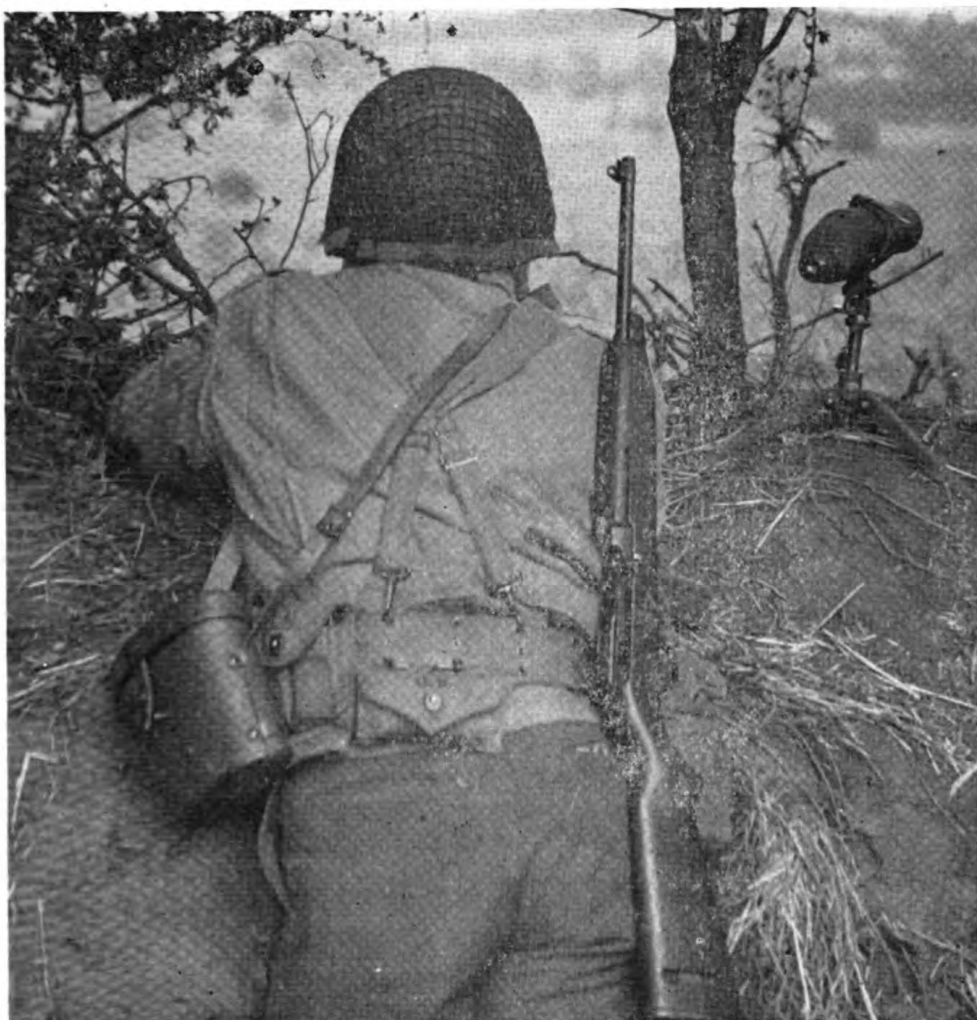
The last major shift in French command took place on the 26th of October. On that date, General de Larminat placed Colonel Chomel in charge at St. Nazaire and gave command of the Lorient area to General Borgnis des Bordes. Policy and command thus settled, the French forces showed steady improvement. By the time the 94th left Brittany there were twenty-one organized battalions of French infantry at St. Nazaire and thirteen at Lorient operating as units of the French 19th Division and Brigade Charles Martel. Between September and December of 1944, the Division aided in the training of all these battalions by conducting schools, supplying instructors and giving demonstrations. Subjects emphasized were detection and neutralization of mines and booby traps, the installation of antipersonnel mines and the handling of signal communications. Division also assisted in the training of several French artillery units which operated within the division's fire direction net. Repeatedly, American artillery forward observers were attached to French patrols to provide supporting fire and protection, since the French forces had no independent artillery.

## Chapter 8: OPERATIONS IN BRITTANY

TO THE 301st Infantry goes the honor of being the first regiment of the 94th Infantry Division to see combat in World War II. Colonel Hagerty's men began relieving the 6th Armored Division on September 9, 1944, and completed this relief two days later. On the 13th, control of the sector, bounded on the east by the Blavet River and on the west by the Leita, passed to the 301st. The front lines ran generally parallel to and south of Quimperle, Redene, Pont Scorff, Hennebont and Nostang.

First contact was made with the enemy on the 10th, shortly after Company K manned an observation post in its area, when a small enemy thrust, aimed at this OP, was repulsed with unknown casualties to the attackers. Later the same day Company E of the 301st reported that two of its men had been killed and that the enemy attempted to burn their bodies in a haystack. However, the bodies were recovered by personnel of the company before they were destroyed. On the following day, members of Company B captured the first prisoners taken by the Division; these POWs were promptly delivered to the 94th IPW Team by Lieutenant Walter H. Maddox. To add to the list of firsts, on this same date, September 11, 1944, No. 2 piece of Battery B of the 301st Field Artillery fired the first rounds delivered by the 94th Division Artillery in the second World War. On the 29th of the month, Private First Class Dale Proctor, Company K, 301st Infantry, earned the first Distinguished Service Cross awarded to a member of the Division. While serving as a telephone operator and observer, this soldier was severely wounded when the enemy concentrated an artillery barrage on and around his OP. Despite his wounds, Private First Class Proctor remained at his post continuing to give accurate fire directions while aid men dressed his wounds. Even then, although suffering great pain, he pleaded to be allowed to continue directing fire; it was necessary to pry the telephone from his hand in order to evacuate him. The following day this soldier died of wounds.

Colonel Johnson, the CO of the 302d Infantry, opened his command post in the vicinity of Plouay on September 15, 1944 when he arrived in the Lorient sector with his regimental headquarters, antitank company and 1st Battalion. The following day, the 2d and 3d Battalions arrived and rejoined the regiment. That afternoon the 302d was committed with all three battalions going into the line. The 1st Battalion was employed on the right, holding the line from the Scorff River to the vicinity of Caudan; the 2d Battalion took positions in the center of the regimental front, extending from Caudan to Hennebont on the Blavet River; the 3d Battalion was committed on the left, along a line

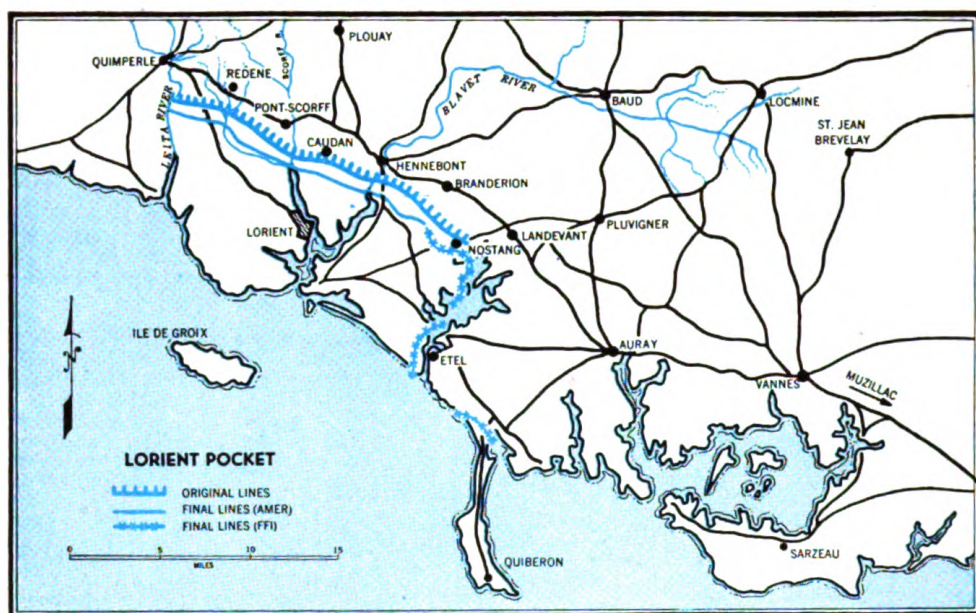


*Hedgerow OP*

extending from Hennebont to Nostang, on the Pont du Roch River. Each battalion operated with one company in reserve while Antitank and Cannon Companies deployed to support the 3d Battalion, which was extended over the greatest frontage. This commitment of the 302d Infantry, completed on the 16th, relieved the 1st Battalion, 301st, which moved into Division reserve in the vicinity of Plouay. This was the first combat relief of one element of the Division by another.

The 302d Infantry suffered its first KIA the day it entered the line when members of Company A, digging positions in the vicinity of Grand Champ in the Scorff River-Caudan area, were brought under accurate enemy time fire. One enlisted man was killed and three were wounded. On the 19th, Lieutenant Herman W. Sidebottom led a patrol from Company F of the 302d into the Caudan-Blavet River



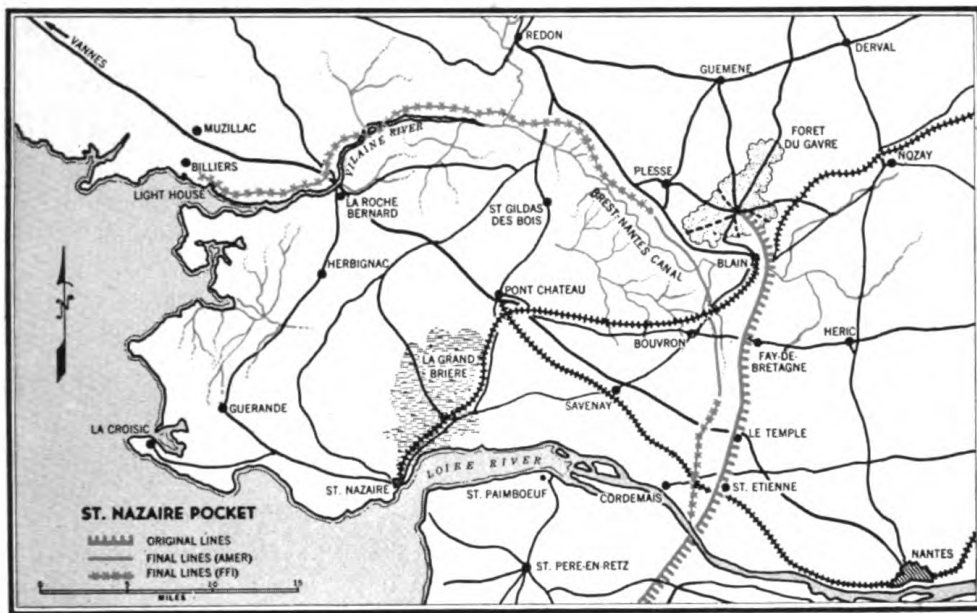


area where it encountered a group of Germans in prepared positions. A fire fight ensued in which four of the enemy were killed and ten prisoners were taken. Among the latter was an officer, the first captured by the Division.

Hardly had the 94th completed plans for besieging Lorient, when its containing mission was extended to include the German forces in the pocket at St. Nazaire. General Malony immediately left for Le Mans by liaison plane, to contact the commanding general of the 83d Infantry Division, whose troops the 94th was to relieve. When the CG returned, plans were formulated calling for a shift of the bulk of the infantry to the St. Nazaire sector. The artillery was to be split between the two sectors with the greater strength remaining at Lorient.

Division Field Order No. 2 was issued on the 15th, directing the organization of the Nantes Task Force, commanded by Brigadier General Henry B. Cheadle, Assistant Division Commander. Composition of this force was as follows: 376th Infantry Regiment; 919th Field Artillery Battalion; 473d AAA Battalion (Automatic Weapons, Self-Propelled); Company C, 319th Engineer Battalion; Company C, 319th Medical Battalion; and the 1st Platoon of Company D, 319th Medical Battalion. In addition, there were FFI troops in the sector of the Nantes Task Force, but no accurate estimate of their strength or composition was then available.

As the 376th Infantry had not yet cleared the assembly area in the vicinity of Rennes, the original orders to proceed to Plouay were countermanded and the regiment was instructed to proceed directly to



the new sector. This was done and on September 17, 1944, Colonel McClune reported the relief of the 331st Infantry of the 83d Division had been completed, as of 0900 hours that morning.

On the night of the 17th, the regiment suffered its first casualties when the Germans loaded a boxcar with explosives and rolled it down the railroad tracks into the town of Blain. Outside town the car jumped the bombed-out tracks without overturning and continued into the area of Company K where it exploded. Private John T. Miller was killed by the blast and several other men wounded. Among the latter were Staff Sergeant James L. McMillen, the first 376th soldier to be processed through regimental medical channels.

In front of St. Nazaire the lines taken over by the 376th Infantry extended almost twenty-two miles, stretching north from the Loire River through Le Temple, Fay-de-Bretagne and Blain, then northwest to the road junction in the center of the Forêt du Gavre. Because of the extended frontage in this sector, the 331st Infantry had organized the towns of Le Temple, Fay-de-Bretagne and Blain into centers of resistance with intervening strongpoints. The 376th effected its relief by taking over these positions and putting the 1st Battalion on the south, in the Le Temple area; the 2d Battalion in the center, in the Fay-de-Bretagne area; and the 3d Battalion on the north, in the area surrounding Blain. On the left of the 1st Battalion, or to the south of the regimental sector, several FFI units were in position. The regimental CP was established in Heric about seven miles east of Fay and almost directly behind the center of the regimental line.

Almost immediately following the relief of the 331st Infantry, Colonel McClune requested and secured permission for a limited advance to straighten his lines and generally improve the forward positions. Without opposition from the enemy, advances of up to fifteen hundred yards were made which brought the towns of Le Temple, Fay-de-Bretagne and Blain well behind the regimental front.

To maintain effective contact between the divided elements of the Division in front of the two Channel ports, Captain Scott C. Ashton, commanding the 94th Reconnaissance Troop, was directed to patrol the area between the right boundary of the Nantes Task Force and the left of the containing force at Lorient. Because of the great area to be patrolled, the I&R Platoon of the 302d Infantry was temporarily attached to the Recon Troop, which the Division Commander initially decided to keep under his own control. In addition to maintaining contact between the two pockets, the troop established liaison with the FFI units in its area and operated an outpost in the village of Etel.

On September 22, 1944, the 1st Battalion, 301st, at Lorient, relieved the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 302d Infantry which then passed into Division reserve in the vicinity of Plouay. This relief was the beginning of sixty-five consecutive days in the line for all three battalions of the 301st plus the 3d Battalion 302d. Both the 1st and 2d Battalions, 302d remained in Division reserve for a short period during which readjustments were made in the Lorient sector; following this, the 302d Infantry, less its 3d Battalion, moved by motor to the area of the Nantes Task Force. On the 28th the 1st Battalion took over positions in the new sector on the right of the 376th, while the 2d Battalion acted as local reserve. The 1st Battalion, 302d, plus one platoon of the regimental Antitank Company and a platoon of the Cannon Company, supported by a battery of the 688th Field Artillery Battalion, took over the Forêt du Gavre from Company L of the 376th. These woods viewed on a map or studied from the air presented an unusual picture. From a plaza-like junction in the center of the woods, ten roads radiated to form the spokes of a huge wheel. These routes were arrow-straight and led to the outer perimeter of the forest. Company B took over the "cart-wheel" which was described as a "spooky place where your back is always exposed"; Company C dug in near La Piardierre; while a platoon from Company A, reinforced with heavy machine guns and a battery of the 473d AAA Battalion moved to Redon to guard the river and canal bridges located there. Initially there were three battalions of FFI in the zone of the 302d, all disposed on the regiment's right. Following the





*German aerial bombs located in an abandoned ammunition dump in the Forêt du Gavre*

establishment of the 302d CP, under canvas, one mile east of Guéméné on the Guéméné-Nozay road, liaison was established with the French.

Five days later, October 3, 1944, Companies B and C undertook an advance to clear the southern portion of the Forêt du Gavre, and establish the front line parallel to and south of the Blain-Plessé road. This was accomplished, moving the regimental front forward from three to five thousand yards and considerably shortening the line.

An alert from Headquarters Ninth Army informing the 94th that its zone of responsibility was to be extended to Auxerre, in central France, was the next development in the Division picture. In view of this General Malony requested additional troops, placing emphasis on the need for light reconnaissance tanks to conduct the extensive patrolling which would be required once the new boundaries became effective. To partially fill this request, elements of the 15th Cavalry Reconnaissance Group were attached to the Division on the 20th of September.

Field Order No. 3, dated September 21, 1944, and effective the following evening, amplified the Division's mission to include protecting the "south flank of the Ninth and Third Armies from Quimper to Auxerre." (Auxerre is located east of Orléans and southeast of Paris, in central France. Thus, the Division front extended some 450 airline miles from Quimper to Nantes and along the Loire River to

Auxerre.) It assigned the 15th Cavalry Group (–) the task of preventing enemy forces from entering the area north of the Loire from Nantes to Auxerre and designated that contact be maintained with the Nantes Task Force in the vicinity of that city. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Quinn, the cavalry group commander, organized the Loire area; without delay he began his extensive patrol mission which was somewhat eased by the fact that all bridges over the Loire had either been blown by the Germans or knocked out by Allied air power.

General Malony now had three separate and widely scattered zones under his command: Lorient, St. Nazaire and Loire. In addition, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop, operating from Redon to Nostang in the Lorient sector, was patrolling an area with a frontage of more than fifty airline miles. Not only was the 94th stretched from "hell to breakfast," it had grown in size. By mid-October the total number of American and French troops under Division control exceeded thirty-five thousand and the 94th was the only division in the theater with its own private navy and air force, *Groupe Patrie*.

Field Order No. 3 also set up the Lorient Task Force and added the 688th Field Artillery Battalion and Company F of the 15th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron to the Nantes Task Force. Brigadier General Louis J. Fortier, Division Artillery Commander, took over the former, composed of the following units: 301st Infantry Regiment; 3d Battalion, 302d Infantry; 301st Field Artillery Battalion; 356th Field Artillery Battalion; 390th Field Artillery Battalion; 199th Field Artillery Battalion; 256th Field Artillery Battalion; 94th Reconnaissance Troop; Company F (composite), 86th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron; Company A, 319th Medical Battalion; and one platoon, Company D, 319th Medical Battalion.

Because of the extent of the 94th's front, it seemed desirable that the division reserve, which consisted of a single battalion, be centrally located in the event of trouble. Toward this end, the reserve was moved from the vicinity of Plouay to the Forêt de Domnaiche, near Châteaubriant, when the 302d Infantry (–) was transferred to the St. Nazaire sector. On October 6, 1944, this reserve was moved to the vicinity of Nozay and twelve days later shifted to La Gacilly, in attempts to find an ideal location for hasty deployment in either sector. On the 27th, the Division reserve was again moved. This time the location chosen was the former French Army training center at Coetquidan, in the vicinity of Guer, where in addition to adequate billets there was sufficient and suitable ground for refresher training.

On the 12th of November, the 2d Battalion, 376th, was relieved by



*Lieutenant James R. Sullivan of the Division Photo Intelligence Team confers with repatriated flyers of the 441st Troop-Carrier Squadron*

Company K of that regiment and the 17th FFI Battalion and moved into St. Nazaire sector reserve, in the vicinity of Vigneux de Bretagne, three miles east of Le Temple. During the period from the 25th to the 26th of November, two French battalions replaced elements of the 301st Infantry between the Scorff and Leita Rivers enabling the 3d Battalion, 301st, to pass to Lorient sector reserve, northwest of Plouay. Thus, the arrival of additional French troops in the area enabled each sector to constitute its own reserve and have readily available a counterattack force, while in case of real trouble the Division Commander had a Sunday punch in the form of the Division reserve.

Battalions were rotated as both Division and sector reserves that all units might have a chance for rest and relief from the strain of front line service. While in reserve, units spent a good portion of the daylight hours in refresher training, with emphasis on infantry-tank cooperation and the attack of fortified areas by assault teams. Opportunities for working with armor had been all too few and this training with the tanks of the attached cavalry later proved extremely valuable. The rigorous schedule followed by units while they were in reserve led to the observation that it was possible to obtain more rest on the front lines than behind them. This was literally true.

To enable both sectors to have the benefit of their services, the Prisoner of War Interrogation Team, Military Intelligence Interpretation Group and the Order of Battle Team were each split into two



sections. The Photo Intelligence Team worked at the Division Headquarters in Châteaubriant, and, after having made a preliminary estimate of the needs of each sector, provided complete aerial photo coverage of the respective fronts. Patrols at both Lorient and St. Nazaire were expertly briefed by PI personnel prior to difficult missions.

General Malony, his infantry restrained by definite orders against offensive action; his artillery rationed in regard to ammunition; his zone of responsibility stretched "over half of France"; and possessed of only a small reserve, decided to commit the Division to a period of intense battle indoctrination. Emphasis was placed on patrolling (the 376th alone sent out 634 between September and December), infantry-tank cooperation, general battle know-how and infantry-artillery cooperation. This last was developed to the point where the ordinary rifleman could and did, over and over again, call for artillery fire on targets of opportunity. The Division was not destined to remain forever on the "forgotten front," and when it emerged from hiding, the CG wanted it to be able to step into the big league and hold its own.

In keeping with the policy of the Division Commander numerous patrols, both combat and reconnaissance, were constantly sent out from all levels: regiment, battalion and company. These activities were carefully coordinated by the Lorient and St. Nazaire Task Force Headquarters (changed respectively to CT 301 Reinforced and CT 376 Reinforced on September 21, 1944 and to Lorient Sector and St. Nazaire Sector on October 13, 1944) to eliminate the danger of friendly patrols encountering each other in enemy territory with possible disastrous results.

On the 2d of October Company K of the 301st sent out a strong combat patrol under Lieutenant David H. Devonald, II. Three FFI soldiers accompanied the fifty-odd Americans chosen for this mission. At 1255 hours, the patrol ran into an ambush and was brought under intense enemy small-arms and artillery fire. As best they could the men dug in under this withering fire. Requested artillery support was promptly supplied by the 301st Field Artillery Battalion, which had a forward observer with the group. A relief patrol was organized from personnel of Company I, commanded by Captain Charles W. Donovan, but this group was never able to reach the isolated members of Company K.

Private Harry Glickman, a member of the Company K patrol, supplied the following description of the engagement:

Everything ran well until we got about 5,000 yards from our lines. Then it happened. Two scouts dropped dead and two more were wounded, as the crack of rifles was heard from all sides. Ambush! The patrol leader acted quickly and deployment started. "Call for artillery time fire to cover us," he yelled. If I ever loved the artillery it was then . . . It was probably the artillery that saved us from annihilation. Concentration after concentration poured in on the Heinies as we withdrew to better positions.

Then it started. Those five hours of fighting against terrific odds. They threw everything at us . . . I saw acts of bravery that day which it seemed could happen only in motion pictures; men charging machine guns and wounded men firing their weapons with one hand . . . The Germans paid a heavy toll, but in the end, we also suffered heavy casualties. Twenty-six wounded and five dead, out of about fifty men.

Toward the end . . . the enemy began to organize and charge. There was only one thing to do. "Concentration Seventeen . . . forty yards left . . . Time Fire . . . For Effect." Behind a hedgerow we waited. Forty yards wasn't too far for safety even with a hedgerow as protection. Twenty seconds later the "On the way!" was sent over the radio and we heard the far-away rumble of the artillery . . . Wait until you hear a 105mm shell coming down on you. Wait until you hear twelve of them scream—scream like sirens as they start their descent. The sound was enough for the Germans. They dove for any sort of cover . . . The top of the hedgerow snapped in pieces and came down on us. We could have kissed the artillery fellows.

But it was to no avail. The enemy had many more reinforcements and our relief was still far off and had been halted. A little while later we realized the inevitable—the radio was on the blink, ammunition low and men were dying of wounds . . . We were ordered to give in.

They didn't treat us badly. They let us keep our watches and other valuables (except cigarettes). What happened in prison camp and how we each lost about twenty pounds is another story, but I shall always remember the day the German captain called me aside, "Please," he said, "tell me, how soon do I get to America after I am captured. I have a cousin in Milwaukee."

Only two members of this patrol escaped the trap. Information obtained from French sources shortly after the engagement, to the effect that over one hundred Germans had been killed in the encounter, was later substantiated when men of the patrol returned to the Division following a prisoner-of-war exchange. It was also learned at that time that the artillery forward observer with the group had destroyed his concentration overlay to prevent its falling into enemy hands. After its destruction he adjusted more than 300 rounds from memory.

On the following day, the 3d of October, Lieutenant Colonel Francis H. Doh's battalion of the 301st dispatched a routine combat patrol in the Pont Scorff area. After penetrating the enemy lines to a depth of about one mile this patrol was brought under intense German machine gun fire and hopelessly pinned down. Totally disregarding the volume

of hostile fire, Private First Class Herbert Austin of Company F stood up and rushed the German position. Standing practically face to face with the occupants of the machine gun nest, firing his BAR from the hip, Private First Class Austin shot it out with the enemy gun crew, killing them all. This fearless action prevented numerous casualties and enabled the patrol to continue and complete its assigned mission.

After securing permission from Division, on the 6th of October, elements of the 3d Battalion, 376th, undertook an advance northeast of Bouvron, to shorten and strengthen the line of strongpoints between the 302d Infantry and this battalion. Principal activity during the operation centered in the area along the Brest-Nantes canal in the vicinity of the village of La Pessouis. From positions south of the canal Company I jumped off in the face of enemy artillery and small-arms fire that was particularly heavy in the neighborhood of the château just east of La Pessouis. By late afternoon, the village had been taken and the infantry pushed to the high ground beyond. As the troops began to dig in they were subjected to accurate, sustained fire from two directions. Apparently the artillery supporting the 302d, across the canal, had mistaken Company I for enemy troops. It was therefore decided to withdraw; as a result, the enemy reoccupied the town. Incessantly, for the next two days La Pessouis was pounded by American artillery and mortar fire. On the 8th, the town again was assaulted and taken by the 3d Battalion, 376th. This time it remained in American hands.

As a result of these operations the battalion front advanced approximately thirty-five hundred yards. American losses totaled four killed and six wounded, against more considerable casualties inflicted upon the enemy, whose force in opposition was estimated at two reinforced rifle companies.

In mid-October the Division Artillery came into possession of a new weapon, officially known as the Launcher, Rocket, Multiple, 4.5-inch, T-27. Each T-27 was composed of ten banks of eight rocket tubes each, mounted on a 2½-ton truck which served as a prime mover and from which the rockets were detonated electrically. In turn, each of the artillery battalions experimented with "The Fiery Farts," as these counterparts of the German *Nebelwerfer* came to be known, forming temporary rocket batteries for this purpose. While malfunctions were frequent, these rocket launchers were used repeatedly against area targets much to the discomfort of the pocketed enemy troops.

During the period from the 23d to the 28th of October, a series of truces were arranged with the Germans to permit the French Red



*Between tours of duty, Private First Class Norman J. Pierce takes life easy in his well constructed "Brittany Bungalow"*

Cross to evacuate some of the 129,000 civilians within the enemy-occupied area at St. Nazaire. Effective hours of these armistices were from 0700 to 0900 hours and from 1500 to 1900 hours daily. As a result of the cessations of hostilities, approximately nine thousand French civilians were removed from the St. Nazaire pocket. Violations of the terms of the truce by the Germans were few and unworthy of mention. However, the enemy did develop the disagreeable habit of favoring sections of the front line with intense mortar and artillery concentrations in the closing minutes of periods of hostilities, knowing that there would be no counterbattery fire in retaliation. After the

first few such incidents, Division Artillery adopted German tactics and some "chickens came home to roost."

Thinly held front lines, both American and German, facilitated the movement of line-crossers and certain members of the FFI became particularly adept at this type of work. From loyal French civilians behind the enemy lines they obtained much valuable information. However, information received was not always accurate and G-2 and S-2 personnel were often hard pressed to evaluate correctly the intelligence received.

On one occasion, working on the report of a line-crosser, Lieutenant "Jimmy" (FFI officers often used assumed names to prevent reprisals against members of their families still in enemy-held territory) arranged for a note to be delivered to a German battalion commander, who was reported to be contemplating surrender, asking for a meeting. At the appointed time, Lieutenant "Jimmy," Captain James S. Young, Lieutenant Joseph E. Glover and Private A. M. Brooks, all of Headquarters Company, 302d Infantry, started from Fergerac, in the St. Nazaire sector, under a flag of truce and walked to the appointed meeting place along the Brest-Nantes canal which separated the opposing lines. Upon arriving, Private Brooks, who was acting as interpreter, hailed an enemy gun position beyond the canal from which a runner was sent for the local commander. Captain Young describes what followed:

In about ten minutes a German officer (a true Prussian if I ever saw one) came striding down the road, field boots and all. He was wearing a raincoat so we couldn't see his rank. He came to the south side of the canal, turned a quarter-face and at rigid attention said: "*Was Wollen Sie?*" German for "What do you want?" Obviously this joker wasn't the guy. I told Brooks to tell him we had come to accept his surrender, to which he answered, "We are Germans here, and Germans do not surrender! You must go now!" Whereupon he about-clicked and strode off. . . . The next day the FFI commander west of Redon strode into FFI headquarters very indignant. He had first-hand information that an American battalion commander, backed by a battalion of infantry and a battalion of tanks, had demanded the surrender of the Germans or he would attack immediately. The FFI commander felt left out of the show.

At midnight on the 8th of October 1944, the 94th Infantry Division passed to the control of 12th Army Group, commanded by Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley. This change of command was brought about by the movement of General Simpson's Ninth Army (refitted and reorganized after the reduction of Brest on the 19th of September) to the Western Front. The 12th Army Group operating under the code name Eagle had a forward echelon in Luxembourg City and a

rear headquarters in Verdun. Division maintained contact with Group by telephone, radio and liaison officers. The two former methods of communication were far from satisfactory as the distance from the Division CP at Châteaubriant to Eagle Rear at Verdun was roughly five hundred miles and, as time went on, more and more reliance was placed upon the 94th's "carbine-carrying couriers." Often it was necessary for the liaison officers to proceed to Eagle Forward, a factor which increased the length of the journey by another seventy-five miles. Liaison officers worked in shifts traveling by both artillery Cub planes and command cars or jeeps. For the most part though, vehicles were used since flying conditions in Brittany were usually unpredictable.

Early on the morning of the 20th of October, the enemy launched his first real attack since the Division had assumed responsibility for the pockets. A group of approximately 250 Germans, of the 3d Company, 986th *Kriegsmarine*, attacked the position of the 1st Battalion, 301st. Three prisoners were taken from the attacking force; from one of these the identity of the assaulting troops was learned. This prisoner also stated that the mission of his company was to seize and hold Grand Champ, adding that it was the practice of his unit to repeat an unsuccessful attack after two or three days had elapsed. The same day, an enemy force estimated at between one and two hundred infantry, effected a penetration of the French line southwest of Nostang but were beaten back by the FFI. This attack, which was supported by an artillery bombardment on the town of Nostang, was believed to be a reconnaissance in force. At 1755 hours on the evening of the 20th, General Fortier reported to General Malony: "Things have been very hot today. They've shelled us with about 2,500 rounds and the shelling hasn't ceased . . . one round comes over about every fifteen seconds."

The following day the French withdrew from the positions which had been under attack, but hasty orders from Division to the local French commanders returned the FFI to their lines before the enemy was able to occupy the area.

On the 28th, the Germans repeated their attack against the French positions in conjunction with a diversionary thrust against the 1st Battalion, 301st, in the Hennebont section. Such a development had been anticipated. At 0725 hours, the enemy started his push against the 1st Battalion with an artillery preparation of several hundred rounds. Forward OPs located some of the enemy gun positions and effective counterbattery fire was employed. German infantry moving forward under the cover of their artillery support encountered stiff

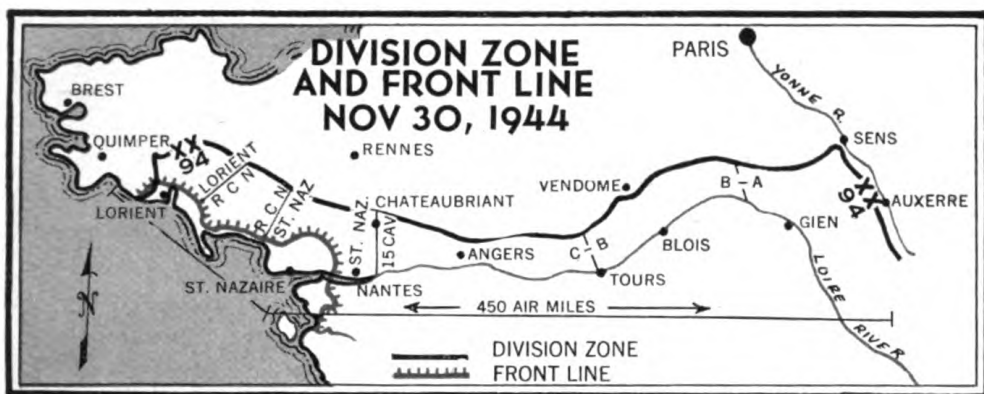


opposition. After failing to penetrate the American lines they withdrew. Later in the day, another hostile force estimated at a battalion attacked the FFI positions in the vicinity of Ste. Hélène, south of Nostang. Advancing behind a force of five armored cars, the attackers succeeded in driving the French back from the Etel River, thus securing the high ground that was obviously the object of this thrust.

Orders were received on the 29th of October, from 12th Army Group, to hold in reserve one battalion as a counterattack force against possible German landings on the coasts of Normandy or Brittany from the Channel Islands. This directive came as a result of a recommendation from the G-2 of Brittany Base Section, Communication Zone, who foresaw the possibility of harassing German forces landing from the islands of Guernsey or Jersey which were held by a force of between twenty-six thousand and thirty-one thousand enemy troops. The new responsibility was assigned to Division reserve, in addition to its other duties, and a complete reconnaissance conducted of the Normandy and Brittany coasts to determine accurately possible points of attack. Routes of advance and areas of deployment were checked and charted. A detailed plan then was formulated. As each successive battalion took up the duties of Division reserve, the battalion staff officers familiarized themselves with these plans, which could be put into effect on an hour's notice. Because of this additional mission location of the reserve was not changed for there was always the possibility that it would have to be committed within the Division zone.

At the request of the commanding general of each sector, a series of boundary changes were made on the 2d of November. The boundary between the Lorient and St. Nazaire sectors was shifted from the Vilaine River, to a line connecting Ploermel, Malesdroit, Questambert, Muzillac, Billiers and the lighthouse on the coast south of Billiers. This further increased the zone of the St. Nazaire sector. Consequently, on the 14th of the month, General Cheadle divided the St. Nazaire Sector into North and South Sub-sectors. Colonel Johnson, CO of the 302d Infantry, was given command of the former while Colonel McClune of the 376th took over the latter. All FFI and FTP troops within these sub-sectors came under the control of the appropriate regimental commander.

The defenses of the Lorient Sector were further improved on the 14th of November when all French forces north and northwest of the line Kerambourn, Lovan, Kermahan and Kermoel were placed under the control of General Fortier, Commanding General of the Lorient Sector. From the same line east to the Brest-Nantes canal, a



zone under the command of the French General Borgnis des Bordes, was established on the 26th. The following day, these changes were completed when all French units north and west of the line Kervignac-Branderion came under American operational control.

Also on the 27th, Division Artillery lost its first liaison plane when a 919th Cub was shot down by enemy antiaircraft fire. Flak blasted away the ship's right wing; it fell from a height of about 400 feet in the vicinity of Fay-de-Bretagne. The pilot, Lieutenant George R. Walgomatt, and Captain Robert F. Goerke, the Assistant S-3 of the battalion, who was acting as air observer, were both killed in the crash, for neither officer was able to jump clear of the plane to use a parachute.

Having long realized that his troops were going stale from inactivity and the monotony of life on a static front, General Malony directed frequent communication to higher headquarters asking for a change of mission or permission to launch small-scale attacks against the enemy's more vulnerable positions. These requests were repeatedly denied. In mid-November, however, permission was received to make limited objective attacks and the sectors commanders were ordered to submit plans for approval by Division. Only one such attack was launched prior to departure for the Western Front and it took place the night of December 7-8, 1944.

It had long been thought that if the German garrison at Lorient could be separated from the forces on the Quiberon Peninsula, the position of the enemy would be considerably weakened. With this in mind, General Fortier decided to reduce the series of pillboxes, bunkers and trenches that formed an enemy strongpoint at the base of the peninsula. The force chosen for this mission was composed of the 3d Battalion, 301st Infantry; the regimental Antitank Company; Company A of the 319th Engineers; elements of the 94th Reconnaissance Troop; Battery A of the 301st Field Artillery Battalion; Battery



*Sergeant Joseph L. Simone inspects an improved king-size raincoat made by Private First Class Orlando D. Ostheller who towers six feet six*

C of the 390th Field Artillery; Batteries B and "Dog" of the 356th Field Artillery Battalion; the medical detachment of the 390th Field Artillery; and elements of Companies A and D of the 319th Medical Battalion.

During the night of December 7th-8th, Company A of the 319th Engineers cleared nine lanes through the antipersonnel minefield that surrounded the enemy position. There were a few bad moments when the overcast which had been predicted for that evening cleared while the engineers were at work. However, luck was with the mine details and the moon soon slipped back behind the clouds.

While the engineers were clearing the necessary paths, the assault troops moved into position under the cover of darkness. At 0823 hours, an intense ten-minute artillery preparation began. Direct fire weapons and mortars were used to increase the density of fire and to button up the pillboxes and bunkers that were to be reduced. Promptly at 0833 hours the infantry jumped off. Company K was charged with reducing the strongpoint on the right while Company I did the same on the left. Meanwhile, Company L cut between these two objectives to destroy the bunkers which lay beyond. All companies were organized into assault groups and successfully employed flame throwers. Perfect coordination between teams reduced the entire area in a matter of fifty minutes, despite heavy German artillery and mortar fire from

west of the Etel River and support fire from the Ile de Groix. As a result of this action fifty-nine prisoners were taken, nine bunkers were reduced and the desired positions obtained. American losses were extremely light. A hit on one of the AT guns, firing direct fire, killed two of the crew and caused the destruction of the piece. In addition, there were only four wounded.

On the 15th of December, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop outpost on the Ile de Houat, between Belle Isle and St. Nazaire, which was maintained to report on enemy shipping between the pockets, was attacked by a force of about eighty Germans who landed by motorboat. Three other enemy vessels, containing about 120 additional troops, remained outside the island's harbor to protect the landing party.

At the same time the German landing party attacked the outpost, a French naval smack carrying Staff Sergeant Orval L. Love, supply sergeant of the Recon Troop, to the Ile de Houat was engaged by the enemy craft off the beach. In the fight that followed the captain of the French vessel was killed and Sergeant Love was wounded and taken prisoner. The four Recon men manning the island outpost were overwhelmed and their radio was captured intact. Following the fight, Sergeant Love was removed to the German hospital at Lorient while the other cavalrymen were taken to the PW cage on Belle Isle.

News of the beginning of Von Rundstedt's winter offensive in the Ardennes reached the Division late on the 16th of December. Security measures were immediately intensified, as it was thought likely that the enemy would drop saboteurs and parachutists throughout France to cause confusion in the rear areas by disrupting communications and attacking supply depots. The 94th was also alerted against the possibility of the German forces in the pockets staging breakout attacks to divert American reserves as was openly hinted by German POWs in the cages at Rennes. Throughout the remainder of December, the Division watched and waited, but by the end of the month it was clear that the desperate drive of the enemy was being checked and that the danger was past.





**Top:** Lieutenant Baldwin of the 6th Armored Division is helped from a German ambulance, preparatory to being moved by boat to the American-held side of the Etel River. **Bottom:** Lieutenant William J. Reynolds is moved to the Etel quay as Lieutenant Colonel Clarence R. Brown, Division Surgeon, checks other American wounded just repatriated.

## Chapter 9: POW EXCHANGES

ANDREW G. HODGES of the American Red Cross joined the 302d Infantry at Camp McCain, Mississippi, and shipped overseas with the regiment. Hodges, who had been a football and basketball star at Howard University in Birmingham, Alabama, was kept out of service by a bad right arm that was a memento of his football days. While in Brittany Mr. Hodges took over the duties of Division Red Cross Field Director when that position became vacant. Fearing that stories concerning poor treatment of American prisoners by the Germans within the pockets might have some foundation in fact, Andy went to work. Entirely on his own, although the sector commanders were aware of his activities, Hodges began to make trips through the German lines under a Red Cross flag, carrying literature, cigarettes, toilet articles and candy to American and other Allied prisoners of war at Lorient and St. Nazaire.

On his fourth journey behind the enemy lines, Hodges remarked to several German officers that he would not have to make so many trips if a swap could be arranged. The remark was dropped in an offhand manner to see what reaction the Germans would make. Nothing developed immediately, but on his next visit Hodges was informed that the German command was willing to make a prisoner exchange. This was reported to Colonel Bergquist, the Chief of Staff, and Lieutenant Colonel William H. Patterson, G-1. Together they consulted General Malony, who agreed to the exchange if higher headquarters would give its approval; the "Chief" soon obtained the necessary permission over the signature of the Commanding General of ETOUSA.

Although the initial conversations took place at St. Nazaire, the first exchange was to be effected within the Lorient pocket. The agreement called for a trade of personnel: rank for rank, branch for branch, with physical condition as nearly equal as possible. The prisoner-of-war camp at Rennes was combed for volunteers, and, after some 5,000 Germans had been questioned, sufficient personnel were gathered to effect an exchange.

An armistice was arranged for November 17, 1944, and representatives of both sides met in an abandoned school in the little fishing village of Etel, west of Auray and south of Nostang. Here the last-minute details were worked out. The Germans minutely inspected the volunteers, rejecting thirteen of the seventy-one Supermen in the lineup. Also, at this point two of the volunteers ceased to be such. Lieutenant Schmidt, the German G-2 of the Lorient Sector, remarked that since there were not enough suitable volunteers, Colonel Bergquist could have only fifty-six of the seventy-one American pris-





Top: A French launch ferries the German exchange delegation from Le Magouer to Etel.  
 Bottom: Mr. Andrew G. Hodges, right, conducts Colonel Borst and Lieutenant Schmitt to the designated point of contact in Etel.



*Colonel Bergquist and Colonel Borst jointly supervising the first exchange of prisoners in the Lorient Sector*

oners. Thereupon, the "Chief" informed the lieutenant that "a good soldier is never caught without reserves" and produced enough spares to fill the quota. The bulk of the men exchanged were members of the 301st patrol which had been captured on the 2d of October. Also included in the deal were men of the 6th Armored Division, 83d Infantry Division, and other American units which had participated in the sweep across Brittany.

After the exchange the repatriated troops were trucked to the clearing station in the vicinity of Plouay for a steak dinner, hot showers and brand new clothes; cigarettes were provided in unlimited numbers. As soon as the men had eaten and rested, G-2 personnel interrogated them as to enemy defenses, fighting capabilities and morale. The Americans reported that physically the Germans had treated them well; however, there was a shortage of food, tobacco was scarce, quarters were cold and entertainment was non-existent. All Red Cross items turned over to the Germans for delivery to the prisoners were received intact. The ex-prisoners stated that loyal French on Belle Isle, where they had been interned, occasionally gave them extra bits of food on the sly and sometimes even smuggled a bottle of wine or *Calvados* into the stockade.





Man for man . . . rank for rank



*"The Chief" and Mr. Hodges pose with German officers participating in the exchange of prisoners in the St. Nazaire Sector*

On November 29, 1944, Mr. Hodges negotiated a second exchange to take place in the St. Nazaire pocket. This swap produced some of the sharpest trading that Brittany had ever seen. It is best described by an Associated Press release written the date of the exchange:

*Near St. Nazaire, Nov. 29 (Delayed) (AP).—*A strange journey by jeep and torpedo boat during which an American Red Cross official from Birmingham, Ala., sat blindfolded for more than two hours, was the opening move in exchange of fifty-three Allied prisoners of war today.

Andrew Gerow Hodges, senior field director for the US 94th Infantry Division, hoisted a Red Cross flag above his jeep, and drove into German lines west of the town of Chauve. He was stopped by a German lieutenant who blindfolded him and drove the jeep himself to a point near the coast. There a torpedo boat took them to St. Nazaire. After a ten-minute walk they entered a house. The blindfold was removed, and Hodges found himself looking at four German officers.

They handed Hodges what was supposed to be a list of all Allied prisoners in that sector. But Hodges, examining it, shook his head.

#### THREE NOT ON LIST

"They're not all here. Two Americans and an Englishman are missing. I know who they are, and they aren't on this list."

One German said: "Well, you won't have to worry about the Americans. They escaped last night."

Hodges asked about the Englishman.

"What do you care about just one Englishman?" the Germans asked. "You don't even know his name."

"The hell I don't. He's Captain Michael R. O. Foot."<sup>1</sup>

The German leaned forward: "I'm afraid we can't exchange Captain Foot. He's given us a lot of trouble. He's escaped four times and been recaptured four times. He knows too much."

"In that case," Hodges replied, "I can only say that the exchange can't come off. We want them all, or none."

"You would sacrifice the freedom of the other men for just one English officer?"

"Yes, or for just one French private. It's all or none."

Finally the Germans said they would exchange Foot for five German majors.

"Then you admit that one British captain is the equal of five German majors?" Hodges said.

When the interpreter translated this for the ranking German officer, he banged his fist on the table, and cried "Nein, nein."

After further parley, the Germans proposed three captains and three lieutenants for Foot. Hodge refused. In the end the Germans agreed to swap Foot for one German major or captain.<sup>2</sup> The agreement was then sealed on a glass of brandy. Hodges was blindfolded and came back.

It proved impossible to find a German captain or major, on the Continent, wearing the Iron Cross, who was willing to go back into the lines. This necessitated flying a German field officer from England to complete the quota. Due to inclement flying weather, Captain Foot's opposite had not been delivered by the time set for the exchange. Therefore, Hodges offered to deliver the major as soon as he arrived and the Germans, who trusted Andy, agreed without question. The exchange proceeded without further interruption.

The Americans freed as a result of this exchange had much the same story to tell as those released at Lorient. Food was bad, German morale low, and, in the rear areas, the enemy troops acted as if they would be glad to have the war end immediately. The St. Nazaire men did report that the German intelligence personnel they encountered were stricter and more thorough than the G-2 people at Lorient.

Capture of the Reconnaissance Troop outpost on the Ile de Houat

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<sup>1</sup>Captain Michael Foot is the son of British Brigadier R. O. Foot, who directed the antiaircraft defenses of London which were so successful in knocking down German V-1s over the British capital. The captain was seriously wounded, while attempting his last escape, when a French farmer discovered him hiding in a cellar and, mistaking him for a chicken-stealing German, stabbed him in the face with a pitchfork. On exchange, Captain Foot was immediately evacuated through medical channels and sent to the general hospital at Rennes. Brigadier Foot later visited Mr. Hodges, General Malony and the other officers who participated in the exchange to thank them personally for the return of his son.

<sup>2</sup>Final agreement was for one major or captain who had been decorated with the Iron Cross.



*Krauts going in . . . GIs coming out, at the St. Nazaire exchange*

on the 15th of December necessitated a third exchange. It has already been mentioned that Sergeant Love, who was wounded, was taken to the German hospital at Lorient while the other four Recon men went to the PW cage on Belle Isle. Here they joined two men from the 3d Battalion, 301st Infantry, who had been captured while on patrol missions. On the 18th of the month, these six men were joined by ten American airmen, the crew of a B-17 shot down on their return from a mission to Regensburg. The bomber crew reported they had lost direction when enemy flak knocked out all radio communication and as the gas supply became low excess equipment was jettisoned



to lighten the plane. When the tanks were almost dry the ship broke through the overcast; below was what looked like the coast of England. Flak being tossed up at the bomber did not detract from this impression since, at that time and until the end of the war, all aircraft, unless properly reported, were subject to antiaircraft fire. In addition the crew knew they were long overdue. The pilot made a good landing on the bomb-pocked field at Lorient. It was not until Germans with drawn weapons surrounded the plane that the crew realized their mistake. Division artillery observers who had watched the whole affair through their glasses from forward OPs, destroyed the plane with several rounds of 105mm after the crew had been removed.

Time was now running short; the 94th's stay in Brittany was almost over. Hasty messages between 12th Army Group and Division resulted in permission for one more swap. To this third exchange the Germans agreed, but tacked on a qualifying clause. Assurance had to be given that the air personnel would not fly again in the ETO. This condition was met and on the 28th of December the last of the 94th's bargains were concluded. An extra man was given the Germans at this time, in payment for Sergeant Love, who had been returned on credit, on Christmas Day because German hospital facilities at Lorient were unable to provide the treatment his wound required. As a result of these three exchanges 140 Allied soldiers were liberated. Included in this number were 105 Americans, thirty-two French (FFI) and three British. With one exception, the Division recovered every man unfortunate enough to fall prisoner to the enemy in Brittany.

## Chapter 10: THE BRETONS

REAL INTRODUCTION of the 94th Division to the French people and their customs came neither at St. Marie-du-Mont nor on the long motor journey through Normandy and Brittany. The days spent in the vicinity of the beach were too few and too filled with activity for any real contact to be made with the local people. As fast as possible, troops were assembled and dispatched to Brittany. The motor columns whipped through Carentan, Coutances, Granville and Avranches; without stopping, they headed for the assembly area outside Rennes where they spent a night in bivouac, before moving to either the Lorient or St. Nazaire sector. En route, the troops of the 94th had quick glimpses of the French population and little besides. The trip to the front was more a study of the terrain of northwestern France and an object lesson in the destructive powers of modern war than anything else. Those men of the Division who made this journey will remember it always, but when they detrucked in Brittany they still knew very little about their new allies.

As the various units moved into the line their contact with the French really began, for in both sectors there were bands of *Maquis* already on the line and at one time or another, all of the infantry battalions worked directly with various FFI groups in the Division zone. In the early days, some units integrated members of the *Maquis* into their ranks, where they served as riflemen and scouts, side by side with the Americans as brothers-in-arms even wearing the 94th shoulder patch. A few of these volunteers were still with the Division when the move to the Western Front was made.

As the rear elements of the Division closed in the new area, supply and service installations set up in the numerous French towns and villages behind the lines while higher command posts were placed within or near populated spots. Thus, with the military forces of the two nations cooperating on a common front and the majority of the American installations located among the civilian population, contacts were close and constant. In and out of the lines the men of the *neuf-quatre* (94th) were welcomed by the people of Brittany.

To most of the 94th the first point of interest was the costumes of the people among whom they found themselves. For the most part the dress of the civil population was poor. Wooden shoes were common, as they were the only sensible and available footwear for the gooey fields, dirty stables and muddy roads. On Sundays and religious holidays activity in the villages increased greatly and the people appeared in their best clothing. The women wore high, starched lace bonnets and picturesque provincial costumes; the men generally wore

black suits and a round, black felt hat complete with Little Lord Fauntleroy ribbons which trailed behind. But, even this Sunday finery showed signs of age and hard wear.

It was soon discovered that in Brittany apples were seldom eaten—and for good reason. On the subject of *pommes* there were two schools of French thought. The younger generation was of the opinion that apples were to be used exclusively as missiles and with this in mind they employed them effectively on every passing vehicle. At first they were tossed gently, but later they were heaved with the speed of baseballs, much to the sorrow of many members of the Division. Adults of the region believed that apples were intended only for cider. Toward this end, they were gathered and pressed into a crude *cidre* that grew in strength as it aged. Regrettably, most of the cider within the Division area had no chance to grow old.

In regard to liquor, no mention of France is complete without reference to *Calvados*. This colorless liquid can be used to start fires, refill lighters or induce internal warmth with considerable danger of an attendant loss of equilibrium. For all three purposes it was used frequently.

As contact with the local people increased, language difficulties came to the fore. Copies of the little blue *French Phrase Book* provided by I&E Sections were faithfully studied and the discovery soon was made that the French language is not composed entirely of the phrases: "*Cigarette pour Papa*," "*Avez-vous de bon-bon?*" "*Goom*" and "*des oeufs*." After a few sessions with the language guides, the braver souls were ready to make small talk. It was far from unusual to see an American soldier and a French civilian with their heads bent over a *Phrase Book* while an interested crowd of spectators gave encouragement and advice. As time passed, the Americans learned a little French and, in the process, the people of Brittany learned a little "American." From this point on, things proceeded much more smoothly.

Among the more startling aspects of French life were the frontdoor compost (manure) piles in the farming regions and the *pissoires* ever present in city, town or village. To neither of these did the American soldier take kindly, considering them unsanitary and indecent. But they had been a part of French life for hundreds of years and change among the peasants of Brittany is slow.

Farm implements of the Brittany peasants were a definite shock to some of the rural members of the Division. Tractors were almost unknown; the few that did exist were propelled by charcoal burners

similar to those providing locomotion for the few trucks and omnibuses that were still running. For the most part plowing was done by means of horses or oxen, though at times even cows were harnessed for this purpose. The custom of harnessing beasts of burden in tandem also came in for considerable comment and there were those who set about computing the loss in horsepower per beast employed.

The warm, crusty French bread which it was possible to buy without coupons, proved a welcome change from GI issue bread and C ration biscuits. It was frequently purchased; sometimes obtained by trading. In regard to trade, despite language difficulties, the troops of the Division did well. Best barter item was always cigarettes, with candy, sugar and canned rations following in close order. Originally eggs could be obtained on the basis of a cigarette for an *oeuf*. As time went on, though, the hens became more exclusive and inflation set in all along the front. One platoon of Company L, 302d, under Lieutenant Walter F. Pier, holding the outskirts of St. Omer, solved the egg problem by rounding up all the chickens in the deserted village and setting up a "Platoon Poultry Farm" in a sheltered spot.

Late in September of 1944, the annual pilgrimage of the Catholic faithful to the famed Shrine of Lourdes passed through the Division area. Participation in the procession was a must for the devout. On the day the entourage was scheduled to pass through a given village, the townspeople would walk several miles into the country to meet the approaching procession. The flotilla, portraying Christ carrying the Cross to Calvary, was welcomed by every priest and brother in the area. As the procession passed along, the clergy would sprinkle the faithful with holy water and groups of children, under the direction of nuns, chanted hymns. From time to time, both the laity and clergy joined in this singing. Most of the marchers trudged along the rough roads barefooted, their shoes slung over their shoulders. This, a chaplain explained, was done as a form of penance, but he made the observation that it also saved shoe leather which was extremely scarce.

If the drams and ounces of perfume purchased by the men of the Division during the stay in Brittany were to be totaled, it would be discovered, in all probability, that hundreds of gallons of *parfum* had been sent State-side. Lace work from Rennes and Nantes also made large dents in unallotted pay. Exquisite Brittany dolls could be purchased for sums ranging from twelve to twenty dollars, but these were definitely collectors' items.

In the city of Nantes, which was used by the St. Nazaire sector as

a rest area and to which a man might earn a 24-hour pass, there was some hostile feeling toward the Americans, caused by an unfortunate incident in 1943 which led American planes, using the lead-bomber method of releasing bombs, to strike Nantes on a marketing day. Target for the raid was the docks and shipping along the river but the bombs missed their mark, causing hundreds of casualties among the civilians. After the attack, demolished buildings were plastered with signs reading "*Détruit par les libérateurs*" ("Destroyed by the liberators"). These were still visible when the Division moved into the area. Rennes also felt some animosity because of misguided bombs, and artillery fire used against the city prior to the German evacuation, but American aid in the work of reconstruction, particularly in regard to the repair of water facilities and the sewerage system, alleviated this bitter feeling to some extent.

## *Chapter 11: ADIEU*

ALMOST A MONTH had passed after the Division entered the lines in September before the first rumor of a relief began to circulate through the command. In October the hot poop was that the 94th would join the VIII Corps, which had finished refitting after the reduction of Brest and was preparing to move to the Western Front as part of the Ninth Army. However, both corps and army moved east and the 94th continued its containing mission in front of the pockets.

During October Colonel Bergquist undertook a trip to 12th Army Group Headquarters. While there, he was informed that two plans for the future employment of the Division were under consideration. The first featured the relief of the 94th by the 102d Infantry Division, to take place almost immediately, if approved; the second proposed a relief by the 84th Division upon its arrival on the Continent. This latter division was due to become operational on November 20, 1944. If either of these plans were approved, the "Chief" was told, the Division would join General Simpson's Ninth Army. Back at Division this information caused considerable excitement; tentative plans were laid for the anticipated movement. But, on October 25, 1944, Captain Eugene B. Walsh, Division Liaison Officer, called from Luxembourg with word that neither plan had been approved. The 94th would not move.

Soon after this, Lieutenant Colonel Phillips, the Division G-4, returning from a visit to General Bradley's headquarters, brought information to the effect that the army group commander had spoken to General Eisenhower about the possibility of replacing the 94th with a French division. No plans had been made to implement such a relief, however. It was just something that was being considered upstairs.

General Malony himself next made the trip to Luxembourg to plead the cause of the Division. General Bradley told the CG he had never intended to keep the Division on its containing mission for so protracted a period of time, but military necessity had demanded such action. The army group commander also added that at that time he could see no prospect of an immediate change of mission. Things remained at this pass until early in December. On the 5th of the month, Brigadier General Grower, Chief of Brittany Base Section, arrived at Division Headquarters with information that another division was to take over the assignment in Brittany and entered into consultation with G-4 in regard to movement plans.

Confirmation of General Grower's information was received from





Lieutenant General John C. H. Lee, CG, Army Service Forces, ETO, is briefed on the tactical situation by General Malony. Left to right: Brigadier General Roy W. Grower, Major General Henry S. Aurand, General Lee, and General Malony.

12th Army Group by a TWX that informed the CG the 11th Armored Division would relieve the 94th on or about December 29, 1944. This seemed like the real thing and when an advance party from the 11th arrived at Châteaubriant to begin its reconnaissances, everyone in the Division felt that the time had surely come for entry into the big league. But, no one had counted on Von Rundstedt or the German winter offensive which began on the 16th of December.

On the 18th, while the 11th Armored Division was unloading on the beaches of Normandy, higher headquarters cancelled the proposed relief. Reserves were desperately needed on the Western Front and the 11th was readily available. As a result, the armored division's reconnaissance party withdrew a bit faster than it had arrived and the 94th continued its assigned mission.

Finally, when all possibility of a relief seemed gone, unexpectedly, relief came. It was brought about by a peculiar set of circumstances. The 66th Infantry Division's foot elements started across the English Channel on Christmas Eve aboard two transports. One of these, His Majesty's Transport *Leopoldville*, which was carrying the 262d and

264th Infantry Regiments, was torpedoed by a German submarine about six miles off Cherbourg, on the evening of the 24th at 1750 hours. This disaster, in which 784 enlisted men and 14 officers were lost, vitally sapped the 66th's fighting strength. Whether or not the division would have relieved the 94th if it had not been for this unfortunate accident, will never be known. But, it is known that General Bradley had long been anxious to get the 94th into the big picture. Official word of the impending relief was received on the 21st of December. Three days later Major General Herman F. Kramer, Commanding General of the 66th, arrived at Châteaubriant with his advance party to plan the relief and to be oriented on the situation.

On the 26th the shaken-up 66th began occupying positions in the line, but all troops did not arrive in the area until after the departure of the 94th. The relief started in the Lorient sector, as plans originally called for movement in the following order: CT 301, CT 302 and CT 376. For the most part reliefs were effected during the hours of darkness.

An interesting incident occurred in the relief of Company D of the 301st Infantry. The night the Panthers took over the company's mortar positions, personnel of Company D assisted in setting up the weapons of the incoming company, zeroed them in and listed the azimuths to likely targets. About this time, the captain of the relieving force appeared and ordered the weapons moved to the rear. A 94th sergeant who had painstakingly supervised most of the work inquired the reason for the move and was informed: "The first thing in the morning these men will get gun drill. Most of them have never seen a mortar before."

The enemy welcomed the newcomers to the line with his versatile 88s and in some instances casualties were caused by carelessness on the forward positions. To the tune of these same 88s, troops of the 94th turned their backs on Lorient and St. Nazaire. At 2107 hours, New Year's Day 1945, control of the pockets passed to the 66th Infantry Division. For the 94th the last battle indoctrination course was finished; the Division was headed for the big time.

During the period of the Division's stay in Brittany, the men of the 94th successfully and completely contained a force of some 60,000 enemy troops. In addition, an estimated 2,700 casualties were inflicted upon the Germans and 566 POWs were taken. To accomplish this 100 men of the Division gave their lives, 618 more were wounded and one man was listed as missing in action as of December 31, 1944. Material assistance was given the French forces in training, supply





*Marshalling area for the St. Nazaire Sector forces in the vicinity of Châteaubriant*

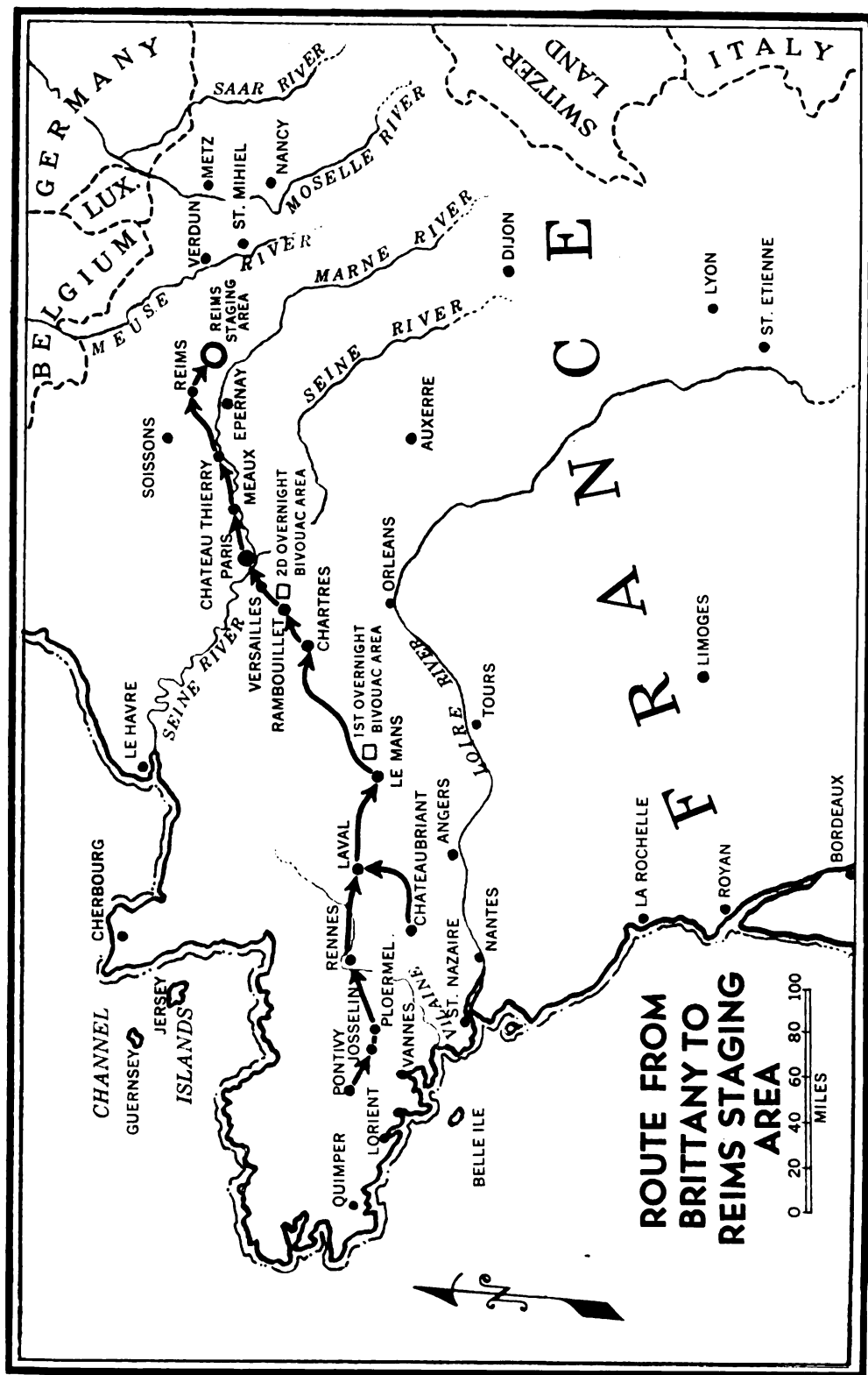


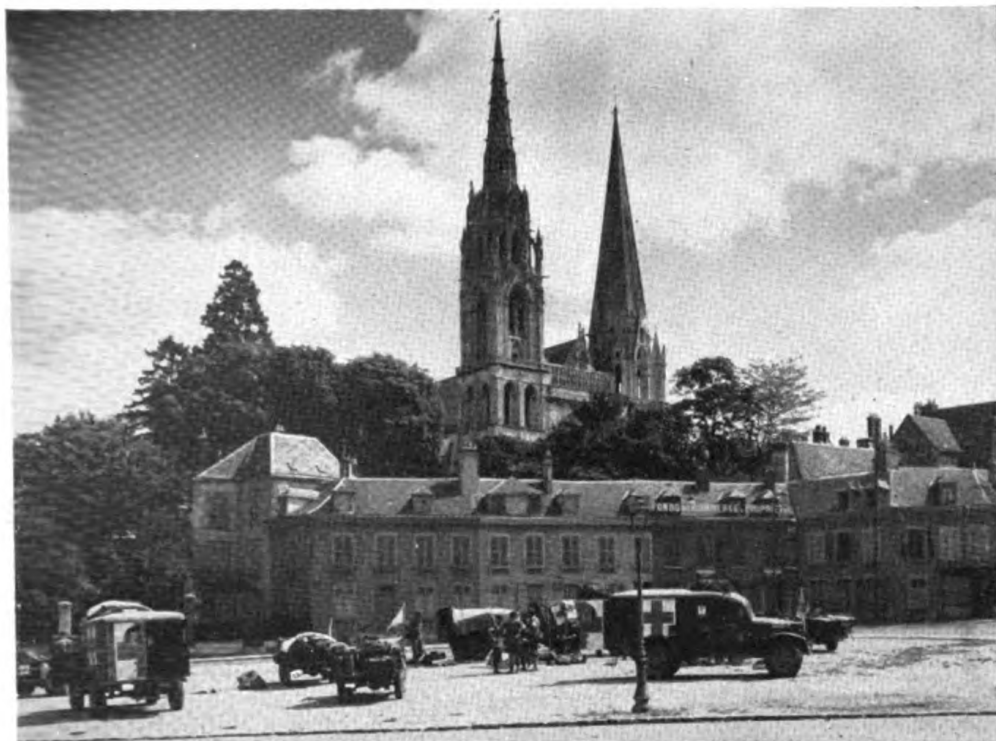
40 men or 8 horses

and the establishment of normal command channels. In the latter regard, problems considerably above the division level were involved. Moreover, the staff of the 94th successfully coordinated the activities of a force which varied from 16,500 to 38,000 troops, both French and American, despite the handicap of language difficulties.

Following the relief, the combat teams of the Division assembled in the vicinity of Châteaubriant and Plouay from whence rail and motor movements were to begin. Three days were allotted to the motor elements for the journey from Brittany to Reims, 125 miles northwest of Paris in the Oise Base Section. Foot elements, traveling by 40-and-8s, were to make the trip across France as fast as rail communications would allow, proceeding to their destination via Le Mans, Chartres, Juvisy, Verneuil, Sézanne, Sommesous, and Châlons. In the final







*The cathedral at Chartres*

analysis, both groups made the trip in about the same time and both suffered equally from the numbing January cold, icy winds, rain and finally snow. Overnight bivouacs were made by the motor columns in the vicinity of Le Mans and Rambouillet.

As the vehicles of the 94th rolled away the miles of the second day's journey and approached the ancient city of Chartres, the spires of a noble and lofty edifice rose in the distance. Higher and higher they soared until the famous Twelfth century Cathedral of Chartres, undamaged by the war, was revealed in all its graceful beauty. Without pause, the march serials rolled through the town and on to Rambouillet. The site of the second overnight bivouac was only a few miles from Versailles and Paris, and the temptation to strike out for Gay Paree was strong. However, strict orders had been issued forbidding such action and, in addition, information had been disseminated on the strict security measures in force in all French cities because of the fear of saboteurs and parachutists. Military personnel without proper leave papers were arrested first and questioned later.

During the stay in Brittany, Paris leave quotas had been small and infrequent, but at last it seemed the whole Division was to see the French capital. They did! A quick look-see and that was all. The convoy routes were designed to pass troops not through but around



the center of the metropolis. Time spent within Paris city limits was no more than ten or fifteen minutes and some of the convoys passed through in the rain which all but obscured the few landmarks which might have been seen.

On the far side of Paris, the highways became a repetition of the march from the Normandy beaches. The ditches along the roads were littered with knocked-out guns, tanks and military vehicles, both German and American, though by far the greater number belonged to the enemy. Famous rivers were crossed on temporary bridges which had replaced the historic stone structures knocked out by Allied air or enemy demolitions.

As the 94th moved east, the Oise peasants were busy gathering the last of their beet crop. Market places were bustling scenes of activity where, for the first time, the troops of the Division saw the U-shaped loaves of bread peculiar to this part of France. (The shape was designed to facilitate carrying.)

Then on the signposts began to appear famous names from World War I: The Marne, Château-Thierry, Meaux, Dormans, Epernay and Soissons. Farther beyond was Reims, famous for its cathedral and vintage champagnes. Most of the men of the Division caught a glimpse of the church but only a few were fortunate enough to sample the wine. Beyond Reims the journey ended—at least for the time being. (Before the Division left Brittany it had been designated SHAEF Reserve. This was changed to assignment to Third Army while the unit was in transit.)

## PART FOUR

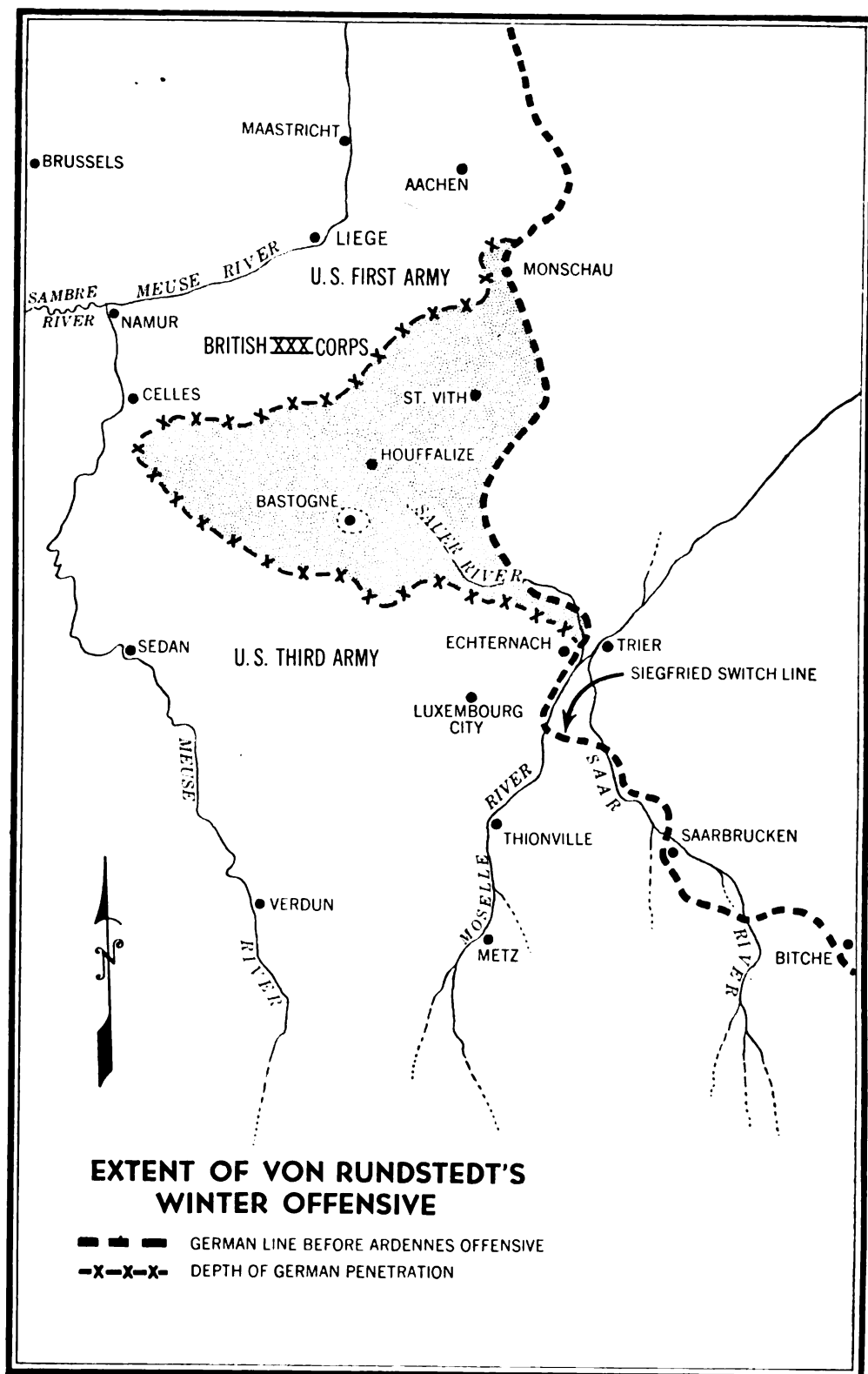
### GERMANY: THE SAAR-MOSELLE TRIANGLE

*A TRIBUTE: The highest honor that could possibly be paid the artilleryman is respect and gratitude from his infantry buddies, with whom he works.*

*In February 1945, when troops of the 376th Infantry were coming out of the line, they marched in single file past the battery position of Battery A, 356th Field Artillery Battalion. They glanced over and saw the artillery guns in position and the cannoneers standing by.*

*One by one, each Doughboy in the column took off his helmet and brought it to his chest.*

*One Infantryman broke a smile across a mud and ice-caked, bearded face and said simply: "Thank you."*



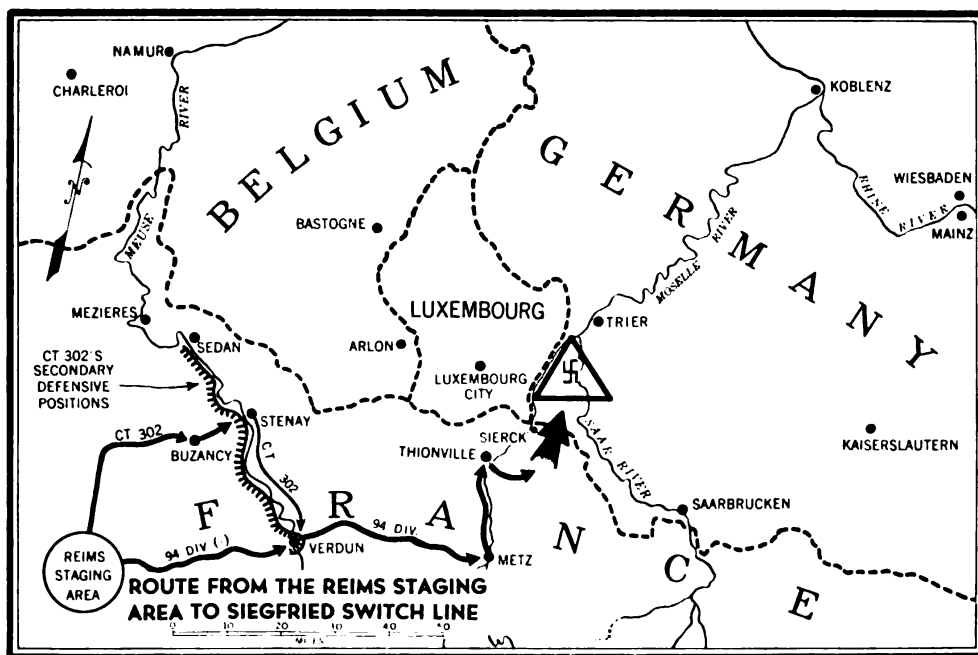
## *Chapter 12: THE WESTERN FRONT*

**I**N EARLY JANUARY 1945, when the combat teams of the 94th Division began arriving at the assembly area in the vicinity of Reims, the fury of Von Rundstedt's Ardennes offensive had spent itself and the Battle of the Bulge had begun. Though the German winter offensive had torn a 45-mile gap in the American lines from Monschau on the north to Echternach on the south, and had penetrated to within four miles of the Meuse River in the vicinity of Celles, Rundstedt had been unable either to cross the Meuse or to expand the flanks of his penetration. On the 3d of January, the American First Army attacked from the northwest with Houffalize, in the center of the enemy's penetration, as its objective. To the south General Patton's U. S. Third Army continued to exert strong pressure on the Bastogne area until the 9th of the month, when it too launched a drive toward the important road net at Houffalize. These operations were designed to act as the claws of a huge pincer, thrusting into the flanks of the Bulge to cut off as many of Rundstedt's troops as possible, isolate them from the main German forces and secure their annihilation or surrender.

The original plan for deployment of the Division called for movement to the Meuse River where a secondary defensive position was to be taken up along the west bank. In this operation, the 94th was to join forces with the 28th Division, which had been badly mauled in the opening days of the Ardennes offensive. Combat Team 302 was en route to the Meuse, between Sedan and Verdun, when the plan was changed. General Patton had decided to employ the 90th Infantry Division, then in position in front of the Siegfried Switch Line, in part of his attack against the southern flank of the Bulge. The 3d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron immediately began the relief of elements of the 90th Division, which then moved northward to the area of III Corps, less one regiment which remained on line awaiting the arrival of the leading elements of the 94th. Since the 28th Division was too far under strength to fulfill its defensive mission along the Meuse unaided, Combat Team 302 was temporarily attached to this unit and continued en route.

The motor columns of Combat Team 301 closed at Reims late the evening of January 5, and plans were immediately made to continue movement the following morning. Third Army dispatched two truck companies to the Division and on these the foot elements of CT 301 were loaded on the morning of the 6th. Before noon, the entire combat team was heading east to join XX Corps.

Darkness fell as the motor columns approached Verdun, but there



was no halt. Hours passed and the troop-carriers rolled into Metz—still there was no halt. The columns turned north, paralleling the Moselle River. About midnight, they reached Thionville; here the vehicles crossed the river on a ponton bridge and the journey continued. There were temporary delays as trucks skidded and ditched on the icy roads, and when exhausted drivers fell asleep at the wheel and lost control. In the unheated organics and troop-carriers, the men suffered horribly from the cold. The steel truck floors literally sucked the warmth out of a man's feet and woolen gloves proved inadequate in temperatures only a few degrees above zero. Cases of frostbite were numerous, but unavoidable.

Unknown to the men and to most of the officers, the combat team was under orders to effect the relief of the 358th Infantry, left behind by the 90th Division, prior to 0800 hours on the morning of the 7th. As the motor columns pulled up in rear of the 358th positions, the relief began without delay. Guides were waiting and the half-frozen men of the 301st were led forward into the lines. Although the relief was not entirely accomplished until 1030 hours, most of the 301st troops were in position by the time designated for the completion of the relief.

The motor columns of Combat Team 376 arrived at Reims on the 6th and left the following morning to join the 301st Infantry. Through the efforts of G-4, arrangements were made for the foot troops of this regiment to remain on their 40-and-8s when they arrived and continue



*French civilians assisting in the repair of the railroad lines through Sierck*

forward by rail. The motor elements of the regiment were able to get off to an early start on the morning of the 7th, and by 2100 hours that same day had closed in their assembly area near Sierck. At 2300 hours on the 8th, the foot troops arrived and the 376th completed its relief of the 3d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron at 0710 hours the following morning. Both combat teams employed two battalions on the line and one in reserve.

On January 10, 1945, Combat Team 302 was released from attachment to the 28th Division. The regiment closed in the Division zone that same evening where it was earmarked as XX Corps reserve.

Approximately six kilometers southwest of the historic city of Trier, (originally founded as an outpost of the Roman Empire, it is Germany's oldest city and reputedly St. Matthew the Apostle's burial place) the Saar River joins the Moselle. Farther to the west, the Moselle is joined by another river, the Sauer. These important river junctions were highly regarded tactically by the Germans. At Echternach on the Sauer, Rundstedt had anchored the south flank of his Ardennes offensive and had used this river to protect the left of his initial advance in December. However, it was with the other two rivers, the Saar and the Moselle, that the 94th was vitally concerned.





*Antitank ditch and pillbox (top center) of the Maginot Line near Monneren*

These two streams formed the sides of a huge triangle whose apex was their junction point in the vicinity of Trier. Between the east leg of the triangle, formed by the river Saar, and the west leg, formed by the Moselle, the Germans had added a base in the form of a deeply fortified defense zone which extended as a switch position to the main defenses of the Siegfried Line paralleling the Saar and sited on its east bank. This switch position extended across some twelve miles of rolling, partially forested terrain from Mettlach on the Saar, through the fortified towns of Orsholz, Oberleuken, Tettingen and Nennig, to a point on the Moselle opposite Remich, in Luxembourg.

Late in November of 1944, elements of the 10th Armored Division and the 90th Infantry Division had attempted to breach this strongly fortified line. A penetration was made to Tettingen and Butzdorf on the 25th, by the armor, but losses were so heavy the position had to be abandoned. Any American move in this area brought violent German reaction for this was a key position in the defense of the important rail and communication center at Trier upon which the Siegfried Line proper was hinged.

Upon moving to the Siegfried Switch Line, the 94th came under control of XX Corps commanded by Major General Walton H. Walker. This corps held the southern flank of General Patton's line, with XII Corps of Third Army on its left and elements of U.S. Seventh Army on its right. As the Division moved into the big picture, XII



*Waldwiese in January*

Corps was engaging in attacks against the southern flank of the Bulge and the Seventh Army, stretched thin to shorten General Patton's front, had been driven back several miles in the Bitche area by aggressive action of the enemy in conjunction with Rundstedt's Ardennes drive.

In relieving the 90th Division, the 94th took over the left of the corps line, between the 2d Cavalry Group of XII Corps, across the Moselle, and XX Corps's 3d Cavalry Group. Farther to the right was the 95th Division along the west bank of the Saar River. The front of the Victory Division extended from a point on the Nied River, northwest of Dilligen, to Saarbrücken to the southeast. At Dilligen, the 95th had established a small bridgehead across the Saar, but was unable to expand it. In the vicinity of Metz, the 10th Armored Division, also assigned to XX Corps, was being held in reserve against the possibility of an enemy thrust from the German bridgehead across the Saar at Forbach.

This in general was the situation along the front and flanks of the XX Corps as the Division began operations on the Western Front.

### *Chapter 13: TETTINGEN-BUTZDORF*

**A**LTHOUGH THE DIVISION was limited initially to a purely defensive role in front of the Siegfried Switch Line, it was well understood that this restriction would not long continue. Consequently, the 301st and 376th Infantry immediately began to probe the enemy defenses with numerous reconnaissance patrols. When ODs proved too conspicuous for the snow-covered landscape, white patrol-suits were improvised from "liberated" sheets and tablecloths.

As XX Corps reserve, the 302d Infantry, on its return from attachment to the 28th Division, reconnoitered the entire corps zone against the possibility of employment as a counterattacking force. In addition, Colonel Johnson's command reconnoitered a series of five defensive lines in rear of the 94th's battle position. As time permitted, these lines were dug into the deeply frozen ground and made ready for quick occupancy, should the enemy break through anywhere along General Malony's extended front. Heavy minefields were laid across likely tank approaches and all bridges in close proximity to the front were mined, as were many defiles. Along wooded roads, in rear of the 94th, the engineers strung necklaces of demolitions around the larger trees, so that these roads could be blocked with little difficulty in the event of an enemy penetration.

On the evening of January 12, 1945, the 1st Battalion, 376th, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Russell M. Miner, received orders to seize and hold the fortified town of Tettingen on the night of the 13th-14th, and to be prepared to repel enemy counterattacks from any direction. This was the first of a series of limited-objective attacks ordered by XX Corps. The force to be employed in this and subsequent thrusts was not to exceed one reinforced battalion. On this matter corps had been explicit. The object of these attacks was two-fold: first, by continued aggressive action to draw German reserve units from the hard pressed Bulge area; second, by the execution of a carefully planned series of local actions to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy units within The Triangle, gradually wearing them to exhaustion.

Riding back to his command post in Perl, after receiving the attack order, Lieutenant Colonel Miner took stock of the situation. The terrain around Tettingen definitely favored the defense. Looking northeast from Wochern, one was immediately impressed by the commanding position held by the Germans in Campholz Woods, directly in front of the 2d Battalion, 376th, which was on the right of Lieutenant Colonel Miner's outfit. This wood was situated on the upper slope of a hill some four hundred feet high which dominated the ter-



*Technician Fourth Grade Sidney M. Turkeltaub uses an SCR-300 to make contact with an OP in Nennig from the church in Perl*

rain as far west as the Moselle. The hill sloped gently from the woods down to the Wochern-Sinz road, its smooth, snow-covered contours broken only by the small tree-capped rise of Der Heidlich, located about one-third of the distance from Wochern to Campholz.

As always the Germans had improved on the natural defenses. From Campholz Woods to a point some three hundred yards west of Tettingen was a row of reinforced concrete dragon's teeth. Extending farther west, from the edge of the dragon's teeth, was an antitank ditch seven feet deep. Only on the Wochern-Sinz road was there a gap in this obstacle; this was known to be well mined. Immediately behind the dragon's teeth was a series of skillfully camouflaged pill-boxes and bunkers connected by underground passages and communication trenches.

The 1st Battalion was disposed with Company B holding the regi-

mental outpost line from Besch to Wochern while Companies A and C were organized and entrenched on the main line of resistance. During the afternoon and evening of the 13th, the 3d Battalion, 376th, would relieve these positions. In addition to the support that could be expected from the regimental combat team, Lieutenant Colonel Miner had attached to his battalion for the attack, a platoon of Company B of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion and a platoon of Company C, 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion. Because of the disposition of the battalion, Companies A and C would lead the attack. The battalion commander knew that Company A had sent patrols through the woods in front of Wochern as far as the dragon's teeth along the southern edge of Tettingen. They had drawn no fire and had encountered no Germans. To the west of the Wochern-Sinz road was a wooded area that extended nearly into Tettingen. This would provide a good assembly area and covered routes of approach for the attack. The situation looked favorable despite the fact that the weather was bitter cold and there was a twelve-inch covering of snow on the ground.

Some two months earlier, the 10th Armored Division had encountered a good deal of trouble when it had taken Tettingen. After holding the town for two days and capturing the pillboxes within it, the tankers withdrew because of the fury of the enemy's counterattacks. Before abandoning Tettingen, the 10th had reduced the captured pillboxes to giant blocks of overturned concrete. But, the pillboxes on the hill to the east of town were still alive and intact. These would cause trouble. Then, there were the antipersonnel mines and booby traps the armored division had planted before it pulled back. These would have to be located, marked and in many cases inactivated. In all likelihood, taking Tettingen would be relatively simple. The real task would be to hold the town once it had been won. Immediate and violent counterattack was anticipated but it seemed certain that such action could be made very costly for the Germans in furtherance of the Division Commander's policy of maximum attrition. Hence, the proposed defense of Tettingen was worked out along with the attack plan. Company C was to seize and be responsible for the west side of Tettingen, facing the orchard; Company A, the north side looking downhill to Butzdorf and the east side facing uphill to Campholz Woods. Company B was to be held in reserve, ready for deployment in any part of the town. On copies of a town plan of Tettingen, each squad and platoon leader worked out exact locations for his men and approximate locations for the automatic weapons.

Opposing the 376th Infantry on the line between the Borg-Munzingen highway and the Moselle was the I Battalion, 713th Grenadier Regiment of the 416th Infantry Division, commanded by a Major Becker, whose CP was located in a concrete shelter just north of Sinz. Total strength of this unit, plus reinforcing elements from the XLI Fortress Battalion, came to approximately five hundred men. Between Nennig and Tettingen, the 2d Company of the battalion manned the pillboxes and bunkers, behind the antitank barrier. From Tettingen to the east boundary of the German battalion was the 1st Company reinforced by the 4th (Heavy Weapons) Company and twenty or thirty men of the fortress battalion. One platoon from the 1st Company and one squad of the antitank platoon were held in reserve at Sinz. The 80mm mortars were in a draw just east of Butzdorf and additional fire support was available from the 13th Company which had its 120mm mortars in position in Untersie Busch Woods, west of Sinz. Also, there was a battery of dual-purpose 88s, which could support these positions, on Munzingen ridge, east of Sinz. The 416th Division Artillery (105mm and 150mm howitzers) had wire communication with observers in the various pillboxes and fire was available on call. In regard to food, the situation was poor. Ammunition was low and the men had been in the line for a long time. Only the thin but steady trickle of replacements and the warm comfortable bunkers kept the German troops in prime fighting condition.

At 0500 hours on the morning of the 14th, Companies A, C and D of the 376th, moved up to Wochern where they were joined by Company B following its relief by the 3d Battalion. Arrangements had been made the previous night to locate the battalion command post in a building on the north side of Wochern and wire was laid to the battalion OP in Der Heidlich. At 0650 hours, as the first gray streaks of dawn began to show behind Campholz Woods, the mortar and machine-gun sections of the battalion assumed positions and the rifle companies moved into their forward assembly areas. Despite the cold, the troops carried only light packs; speed and ammunition were of far greater importance than comfort.

H-hour was announced at 0710 hours by the rolling thunder of the 105s of the 919th Field Artillery Battalion softening up Tettingen. After a twenty-minute preparation the attack jumped off. While the 4.2 chemical mortars raised fountains of white phosphorus along the ridge east of Tettingen, Lieutenant Claude W. Baker's heavy machine-gun platoon chattered from the forward edge of Der Heidlich,





*An infantryman of the 1st Battalion, 376th Infantry, dashes through the orchard outside Tettingen. Heavy fire was still falling on this area as the picture was taken.*

spraying Campholz Woods and the enemy pillboxes that were within range.

According to plan, Company A moved out on the right and Company C on the left. First contact was made by the latter unit, moving forward with the 2d and 3d Platoons in the assault. As the leading platoons crossed the antitank ditch and moved into the orchard beyond, three Germans ran from a house and were cut down by the rifle fire of the advancing infantry. Company A caught several rounds of mortar fire as they dashed through a gap in the dragon's teeth and left their first casualties in the snow behind them. It was still too dark to see much but the flash of bursting shells silhouetted the running men as they pushed into town. While the darkness added to the difficulty of maintaining contact between the companies, nevertheless, the operation proceeded smoothly. Except for sporadic rifle fire from a few of the buildings, Tettingen was silent as the troops of Companies A and C moved among the houses. Company C seized the southern and western sections of the town while Company A was taking the eastern and northern portions. Buildings were methodically

hand-grenaded, then stormed. Some twenty-three Germans routed out of the cellars were quickly disarmed, searched and moved back to Wochern.

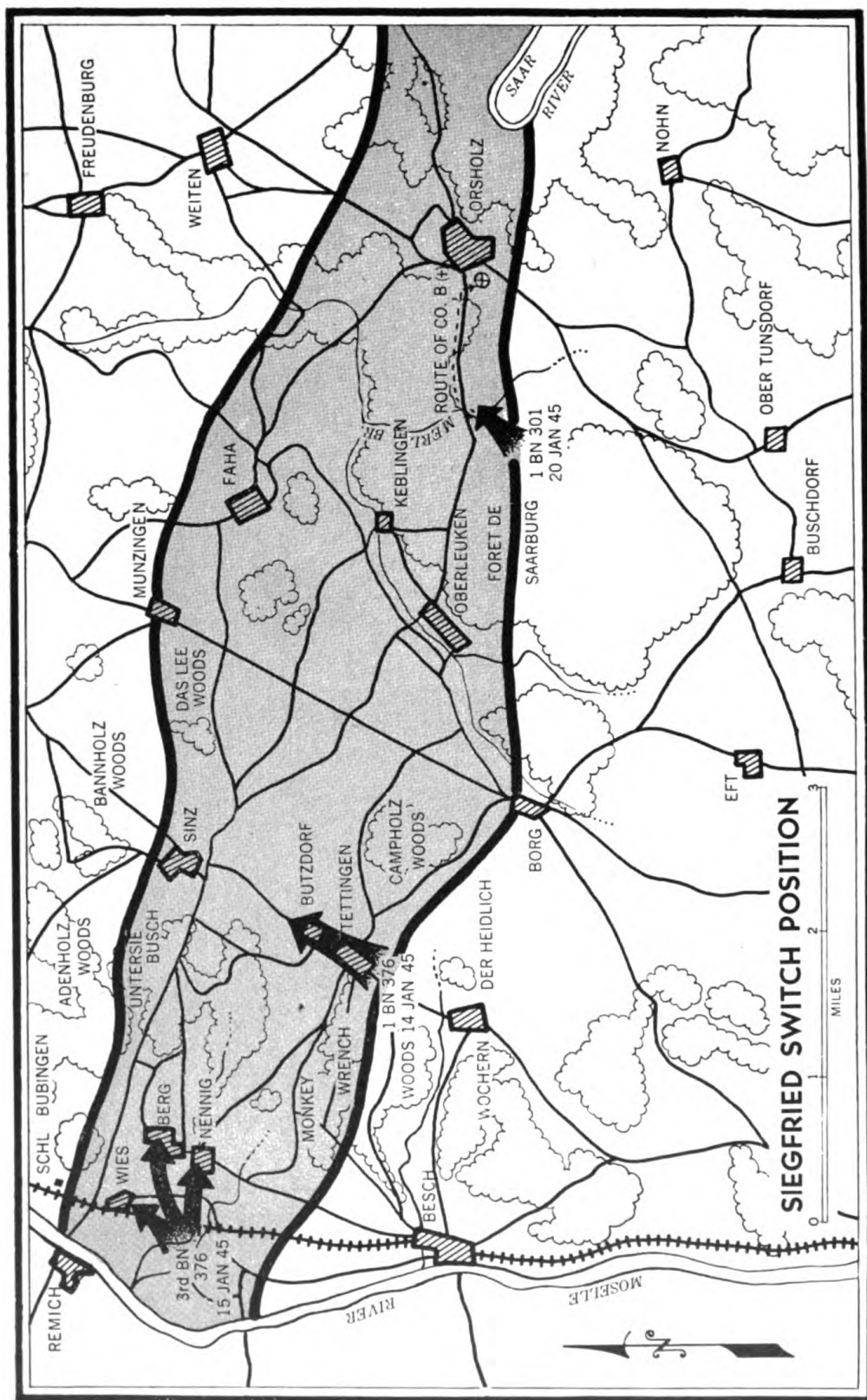
By 0815 hours the town was completely occupied; organization of the defenses began according to plan. Captain Edwin E. Duckworth of Company C moved his men into position in the buildings and trenches on the west of town, and posted six men in the houses in the orchard. The 60mm mortars were set up in the ruins of the blown pillbox on the southern edge of town where they were given rifle protection by some men of the 1st Platoon.

At the same time Captain Carl J. Shetler, commanding Company A, organized his men on their prearranged positions. The 1st Platoon dug in on the north while the 2d and 3d prepared to defend the east side of Tettingen. Concurrently, a patrol of one squad was sent to reconnoiter the pillboxes three hundred yards east of town. This party worked its way to the edge of the hill, locating four or five boxes. These were so skillfully camouflaged that the scouts were on top of one of the pillboxes before voices from inside gave away its position. Since the patrol had no means of breaking into the fortifications, it withdrew.

Back at Der Heidlich the progress of the operation was followed by anxious eyes. The Assistant Division Commander, General Cheadle; the Regimental Commander, Colonel McClune; Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Love, G-2; Lieutenant Colonel Rollin B. Durbin, G-3 and the Division Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Noel H. Ellis, were at the battalion OP. They were enthusiastic about the success of the attack and saw no reason why it could not be exploited. This resulted in the decision to take Butzdorf, although this town had not been included in the original attack plan. Orders were speedily issued that the battalion would jump off again at 1000 hours.

When informed of this decision, Lieutenant Colonel Miner looked at his watch. It was then 0820 hours. If the attack was to continue as scheduled, he would have to move quickly. The battalion commander directed Captain Larry A. Blakely, his artillery liaison officer, to arrange for a ten-minute preparation on the new objective beginning at 0950 hours. Then he and his command group headed for Tettingen, closely followed by Lieutenant Baker and his machine-gun platoon.

When Lieutenant Colonel Miner arrived in Tettingen he set up his command post in the basement of the house across from the church, in the southern part of town and sent for Captain Shetler. Very



shortly thereafter, the CO of Company A reported; Lieutenant Colonel Miner ordered him to attack Butzdorf at 1000 hours and to prepare to hold the town against counterattack.

When Captain Shetler received this order his company and its attachments were completely deployed on the north and east of Tettingen preparing to defend the town. Immediately the CO sent a runner to recall the reconnaissance patrol hunting pillboxes east of town and moved forward to contact his platoon leaders. He informed Lieutenant George L. Dumville that his platoon would act as support during the new attack and instructed Lieutenant Tom Hodges to move forward at 1000 hours to seize everything in Butzdorf on the east of the Wochern-Sinz road. Captain Shetler next contacted Lieutenant Claude W. Baker of Company D, and ordered him to reconnoiter for positions from which to support the coming attack.

By this time enemy fire on Tettingen had increased greatly and 88s east of Sinz were sniping at individuals as they moved among the buildings in the northeastern part of town. So closely was the warning whistle of incoming mail followed by a shell burst there was scarcely time to flatten in the snow before screaming steel fragments were ricocheting off the stone walls of the buildings. German 80mm mortars, east of Butzdorf, were active and the explosion of their projectiles added to the noise and confusion in town, as well as to the hazard of moving from building to building.

After considering the report of the patrol recalled from the pillbox area east of Tettingen, Captain Shetler returned to the battalion command post recommending that the attack on Butzdorf be postponed until these pillboxes were reduced, since enfilading machine-gun fire from these strongpoints could be brought on the assault platoons as they advanced. Lieutenant Colonel Miner refused to delay the attack. Company A was to advance at 1000 hours. It was then fifteen minutes to the scheduled time of attack; Captain Shetler hurried back to finish issuing his orders.

As the men of Company A crawled out of their cellars and captured foxholes and down from their attics, the support platoon of Company C, commanded by Lieutenant Ben R. Chalkley, moved from the south of town and took over the defenses on the northeast. Lieutenant Chalkley established the platoon command post almost on his MLR and prepared an all-round defense. Sergeant Kornistan and Sergeant Douglas, with six riflemen and four engineers carrying explosives, moved out to see what could be done about reducing the pillboxes nearest the position.

When Captain Shetler reached his 1st Platoon in the northern part of Tettingen, they were busily engaged in strengthening their newly won positions. The captain motioned Lieutenant Richard L. Creighton to join him. It was then 0955 hours and the artillery preparation of the 919th Field Artillery had been falling on Butzdorf for almost five minutes. Captain Shetler spoke first: "Creighton, I want you to attack Butzdorf at 1000. Take everything on the west of the road."

Lieutenant Creighton looked at his company commander in disbelief and amazement. "You mean now?"

"Yes, now." Captain Shetler replied.

Since it was obvious that this made the 1st Platoon responsible for most of Butzdorf, the CO of Company A ordered Lieutenant Hodges to jump off first and seize the house halfway between Tettingen and Butzdorf. Lieutenant Creighton would then follow and Lieutenant Dumville would remain in the northern edge of Tettingen in support. Lieutenant Baker, who was unable to find suitable positions for his machine guns, was instructed to follow the support platoon when it moved.

It was 1007 hours before Lieutenant Hodges was able to start his platoon down the hill toward Butzdorf. Enemy artillery continued to pound Tettingen, but the small-arms fire which had been coming from Butzdorf was fairly well silenced by the artillery preparation on that town. When Lieutenant Hodges had advanced some two hundred yards, Lieutenant Creighton's platoon followed after experiencing some difficulty in assembling. Slowly they worked their way down the slope, which was entirely without cover, as mortar and 88 fire burst among the trees and along the road. Captain Shetler followed Lieutenant Hodges' support squad, accompanied by his messengers and radio operator.

To the east, on the Borg-Munzingen ridge, enemy observers watched this new development. Lieutenant Hodges' leading squads had passed the halfway house, and the support squad and company command group were just in front of it when a series of heavy explosions burst among them. The men hit the dirt and the explosions continued. Lieutenant Creighton's platoon, on the left, broke into a run as the enemy concentration began and stormed into Butzdorf. Lieutenant Hodges' support squad soon followed suit. During the confusion one of the BAR men located a German mortar on the right flank near a pillbox, and effectively silenced it with a few well placed bursts. Some of the fire then ceased and the medics moved in to attend the wounded. Captain Shetler was badly hit, his radio operator was killed

and the radio destroyed. In all, there were about fifteen wounded who had to be evacuated. These casualties were carried into the halfway house. From there they were later evacuated up the hill to Tettingen, on litters and doors.

Lieutenant David F. Stafford, the company executive officer, came forward without delay to assume command. He had with him the first sergeant and had picked up what was left of the command group, but with the radio gone there was no means of communication with battalion except by runner. Moreover, the artillery forward observer, Lieutenant William C. Woodward, had remained in a house on the forward edge of Tettingen, from which there was fair observation, and Lieutenant Stafford had no means of direct contact with him. However, the situation was not too bad as the leading platoons were rapidly clearing Butzdorf.

By 1113 hours, the 1st and 2d Platoons had mopped up the town taking prisoner a few bedraggled-looking individuals in long, floppy overcoats. Preparations for a thorough defense began at once. As planned, Lieutenant Creighton's men took over the west of Butzdorf while Lieutenant Hodges' platoon prepared to defend the east. Lieutenant Dumville's platoon was ordered to occupy the halfway house and the row of buildings on the south of town, while Lieutenant Baker was emplacing his machine guns to cover the likely avenues of approach for an enemy counterattack. Then everyone settled down to await developments. Looking up at the ring of enemy-held hills surrounding Butzdorf, the troops realized that the worst was yet to come. A salient more than a mile deep had been thrust into the German defenses. It had to be held, no matter what the enemy might do to recover this valuable ground.

About 1300 hours, some fifty men were seen debouching from Campholz Woods, in a column of twos. At first it was assumed that they were prisoners being brought back by a patrol from Company C. Presently it was observed that they were armed; closer scrutiny identified them definitely as Germans. A machine-gun was hurriedly displaced to cover the group and Captain Larry A. Blakely, the artillery liaison officer, cranked his telephone and shouted for fire direction to prepare for a shoot. The files of Germans moved slowly forward and, as they deployed, firing began. Artillery shells rattled overhead and the ground at the feet of the enemy erupted. Rifles and automatic weapons poured carefully aimed fire into the group. Among the bursting shells, the enemy was seen to scatter. Some few raced for



the shelter of nearby pillboxes but most lay where they had fallen in the snow.

A short time later, an enemy patrol in perfect V formation, led by an officer in a light coat, emerged from Campholz Woods. Watchful eyes in Tettingen followed the Germans as they moved down the hill. A machine gun went into action and the mortar platoon back in Wochern dropped an effective concentration. This ended the patrol. At 1335 hours, the battalion commander ordered Company B forward from its reserve position in Wochern. En route, the march was periodically interrupted by enemy artillery and mortar fire, but the 1st Platoon moved into Butzdorf without incident while the remainder of the company took positions in Tettingen to strengthen that garrison. After this move, the remainder of the afternoon passed quietly while the entire battalion improved the positions it had won. Defensive fires of the artillery, mortars and machine guns were coordinated and the Antitank Platoon placed its guns in position outside Wochern; the recommendation of the platoon leader not to move into Tettingen had been accepted. Wire communications were laid and relaid as fast as they were knocked out. Enemy shelling was intermittent but intense throughout the afternoon and evening. An 88 ignited a building on the square in Tettingen and the fire, which no one attempted to extinguish, sent a tall pillar of smoke rising into the winter sky.

Unknown to the troops in Tettingen and Butzdorf, important decisions were being made behind the enemy lines. The 11th Panzer Division, nicknamed the *Gespenster* (Ghost) Division, one of the finest German units on the Western Front, had been moving from Trier to the Rhine when the 1st Battalion launched its attack. Hastily, the 11th was rerouted. It headed west for the Saar-Moselle Triangle, with orders to restore the original line regardless of cost. Also, the 714th Grenadier Regiment of the 416th Infantry Division was ordered to leave its comfortable bunkers along the east bank of the Saar and move to the aid of its brother regiment, the 712th. The 416th Division Replacement Battalion, complete with cadre and commanded by a Major Kraft, was hurried toward Tettingen with orders to attack immediately.

As the night wore on, Tettingen seethed with activity. Casualties were evacuated and all types of ammunition and ten-in-one rations were brought from Wochern to Tettingen by hand. From there they were hand-carried into Butzdorf. Company B sent a three-man contact patrol along the road to Wochern while Company A sent four



"Alles Kaputt"

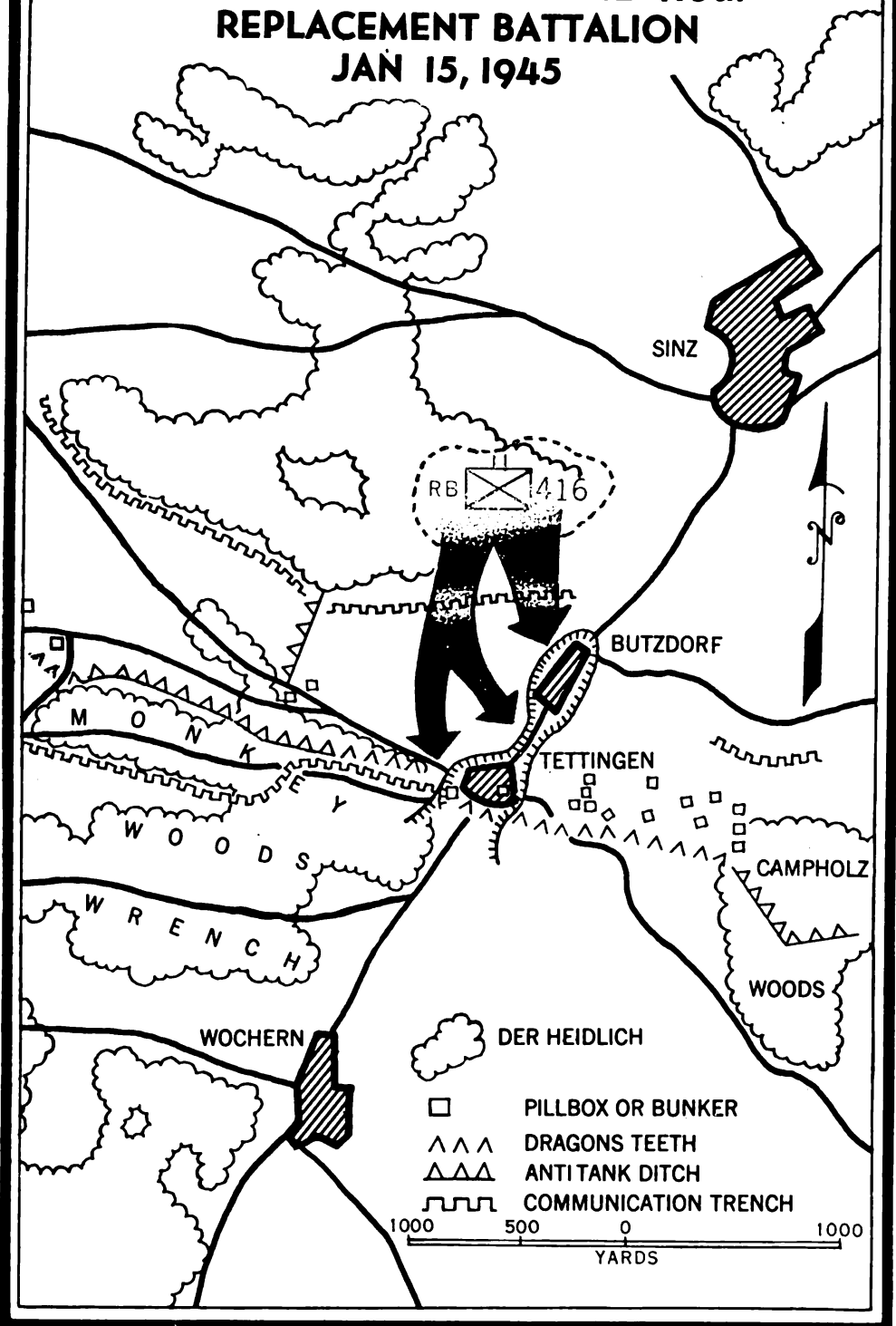
men up the draw east of Butzdorf, to locate the German mortars which had been firing from that vicinity all day. This latter patrol reported, on its return, that the enemy had withdrawn from these positions. Another four-man reconnaissance patrol, dispatched to the northwest, reported they heard an undetermined number of men moving in the woods between Nennig and Butzdorf.

During the early hours of the 15th, the enemy shelling increased in intensity. At 0440 hours those few fortunate souls who had dozed off were jolted into awareness by a sudden, intense artillery and mortar concentration which walked up and down the streets of Tettingen, knocking down chimneys, blasting walls apart and scattering bricks in the streets. The men in the foxholes pulled their helmets lower over their ears and cautiously peered into the night between rounds. Deep in the cellars, men stared at each other in the darkness. What next?

On the wooded hill northwest of town, Major Kraft assembled his four hundred men and pushed them off toward Tettingen and Butzdorf. Many had filled their canteens with *Schnapps* or Cognac and more than a few had also filled their bellies. Down the hill they charged, yelling like madmen.

Captain Blakely called for defensive concentrations 1, 2 and 6, and Staff Sergeant Estle E. Templeton of the mortar platoon yelled for mortar concentrations 1 and 2. In front of the attackers the ground rocked and roared. Northwestern Tettingen spouted livid streaks of rifle fire, and brilliant streams of tracers from the platoon of heavy

# COUNTERATTACK OF THE 416th REPLACEMENT BATTALION JAN 15, 1945



machine guns stabbed the darkness, as final protective lines were laid. Scores of the attackers fell, but the rest charged on. Through the orchard and up the antitank ditch they raced. They assaulted the house held by the six men from Company C; threw hand grenades from room to room and into the cellar. In less time than it takes to tell the place was filled with yelling Supermen. The half-dozen men holding the house decided it was time to leave and, leaping from one of the windows, dashed for the shelter of town. In Tettingen they encountered Sergeant Templeton and requested mortar fire on the building. Quickly the 81s were adjusted with telling effect. Screams of the wounded and dying mingled with the crash of exploding shells and crumbling walls. A tank destroyer edged into firing position and delivered sufficient rounds to eliminate any Germans who remained alive in the house.

But, still the Germans came. They surrounded Butzdorf and crawled between the buildings in Tettingen. They encircled individual houses and grenaded the rooms systematically. In several instances enemy machine-gun crews set up their weapons within ten yards of a building to pour streams of fire through the windows and doors. For three hours the fighting continued as small groups on both sides fought savage actions without knowledge of the fate of their comrades. Only the volume of fire, in which friendly and enemy weapons were identified by characteristic sound, gave assurance to the attackers and the attacked. The western half of Tettingen seemed to rock under the intense mortar and artillery concentrations thrown against it. American hand grenades and German potato mashers were exchanged freely and the M1s did extra duty.

Toward the end of the second hour of the fighting, a hasty check of the remaining machine-gun ammunition revealed that only about four full boxes were left. More than 32,000 rounds had been expended. Someone would have to make the trip back to Wochern for a hasty resupply and Corporal Donald W. Kreger, transportation corporal of Company D, volunteered for the job. He worked his way back to Wochern and returned with 64,000 rounds loaded on his vehicle. This was the first vehicle to make the run into Tettingen; presumably the road was free of mines.

With the coming of dawn, firing slackened and the mortars in Wochern coughed up the final rounds of the 4,000 they fired in helping to repel this attack. Apparently, the main effort of the German thrust had been directed against Tettingen, but Butzdorf had received a goodly share of attention. Then at 0755 hours all firing ceased.

Northwest of Tettingen there were scattered bundles of human litter dotting the snow, among the stubs of what had once been trees. The air was filled with the odor of burnt cordite and there was evidence of destruction everywhere.

Private Milton A. Welsch of the battalion medical detachment, noticing some of the bodies beyond town slowly dragging themselves through the snow, went forward to investigate. He found between thirty and thirty-five Germans alive, but wounded and freezing to death. These casualties were speedily evacuated and treated. Their socks and gloves were frozen to their bodies and the skin peeled away as they were removed. Later, other Germans were found hiding in the surrounding woods and trenches. In all, some sixty prisoners were rounded up and sent to the rear. Of the whole attacking force of some four hundred men only about one hundred returned to the enemy lines.

For the Americans the day then settled down to one of watchful waiting. Continuous mortar and artillery fire discouraged movement on the streets; only the boldest risked the trip into Butzdorf. The troops dined on their first ten-in-one rations since crossing the Channel. Water was a major problem and after the first man to visit the town pump was shot by a sniper, it was generally decided that melted snow would make an acceptable substitute. In Butzdorf, charges of nitro-starch were used to breach holes in the walls of adjoining buildings. These mouseholes eliminated the necessity for venturing into the fire-swept streets and provided easy passage from house to house.

## Chapter 14: NENNIG-BERG-WIES

WHILE ITS 1st Battalion was engaged at Tettingen and Butz-dorf, the rest of the 376th Infantry was not idle. On the afternoon of the 14th, the day Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men took their objectives, orders were given Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin E. Thurston, commanding the 3d Battalion, to seize and hold the towns of Nennig, Berg and Wies the following morning. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston had already received a warning order for this operation and had formulated his attack plans.

Nennig was composed of about fifty stone buildings situated on the extensive mudflats bordering the Moselle River in this vicinity. West of the town two small streams flowed into the river. Immediately east of Nennig was some high ground which overlooked it. To the south and west the terrain was flat and level, devoid of vegetation and broken only by a few small gullies. A double track, north-south railroad servicing the towns in the Moselle valley passed between Nennig and the river, some six hundred yards west of town. Midway between the railroad and Nennig was a road leading north into Wies, a small town approximately 1,500 yards to the northwest. Berg, the last of the villages included in the battalion mission, was located some six hundred yards north of Nennig. It was composed of about twenty houses and a strongly fortified castle.

Fear of alerting the enemy to this new attack led to the decision to dispense with much of the usual patrol reconnaissance. Available maps and aerial photographs were studied exhaustively, then a visual reconnaissance was conducted by the battalion commander and his staff from an OP in Besch. This led to an important decision. It had been suggested that the attack be launched from the east, but the terrain and enemy defenses to be encountered in this approach caused Lieutenant Colonel Thurston to question such action. Seven hundred yards south of Nennig on the east of the Besch-Nennig road were five manned enemy pillboxes and it was known that a previous American attack against these fortifications had been stopped in its tracks. Moreover, the area around these boxes was reported to be heavily mined. Considerable activity had been observed in the woods extending to the east and the strength of the enemy in these woods was an unknown factor. Also, an attack from the east meant either a rush down a steep hill, with consequent disorganization, or advancing along a narrow gorge that could be held easily by a few determined riflemen reinforced with automatic weapons. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston decided to attack from the west.

In the Nennig area the terrain was such that, looking south from



the fortified line in front of the town, all approaches were plainly visible to the enemy. Hence it was evident that even an attack from the west would have to be conducted so that the attacking force crossed the open ground under the cover of darkness or smoke. If this was not done the attackers would be picked off against the snow like so many clay pigeons.

During the 1st Battalion's attack on Tettingen, Companies I and L of the 376th had been held in reserve in the woods west of Wochern. On the night of the 14th-15th, the entire battalion, plus Company A of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion and a platoon from the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion which had been attached, assembled in Besch. A section of mortars under Lieutenant Raymond J. King, which had been giving direct support in the attack on Tettingen, was withdrawn to aid in the coming push.

At 0300 hours the morning of the 15th, Lieutenant Charles R. Palmer and a squad from the 319th Engineers swept a path for almost two miles, from the northern edge of Besch to the railroad tracks west of Nennig which had been designated as the line of departure. The path to the LD was a torturous one. Initially it ran northwest, intersecting the Moselle opposite Nennig. It then followed the river north for a quarter of a mile before it doubled back, south and east, to the stretch of track west of town. This twisting lane through the mine-fields was marked with phosphorescent tabs strung on wires. The engineers also provided the leading companies with pole charges and made available four flame throwers. To forestall any motorized counteroffensive on the part of the enemy, a belt of antitank mines was laid across the road leading into Besch.

Despite the harshness of the weather and the imposing German defenses, the men of the 3d Battalion were very confident. Reports coming out of Tettingen had been favorable and the troops were sure they would fare as well as Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men.

Lieutenant Colonel Thurston decided to leave Company I in Besch as his reserve. Formation prescribed for the remainder of the battalion was a column of companies with men in single file. Captain Julian M. Way of Company K led off with his unit stretched out behind him. A platoon of heavy machine guns and a mortar section from Company M followed; behind this group, by 500 yards, came Company L, commanded by Captain William A. Brightman. The remaining heavy machine-gun platoon of the battalion brought up the rear of the column.

The night was bitter cold and the ground covered with snow or ice.



*Moving up the Moselle to Nennig. The triangular shadow on the back of the leading soldier is cast by an engineer minefield marker.*

Footing varied from difficult to treacherous. Every man in the column was loaded with equipment or extra ammunition, for there was no knowing when resupply would be possible. Constant care had to be taken to keep within the lane swept by the engineers through the snow-covered minefields. As the column trudged along toward the line of departure, the crunching and scraping of ice floes in the river covered what little noise was made. One unexpected hardship was encountered en route. The engineers had not had time to bridge the small streams between Besch and Nennig, so the troops waded waist deep through the icy water.

At 0715 hours, the time the battalion was scheduled to cross the line of departure, the leading elements were still one thousand yards short of this point, as the path to the LD was not completely cleared. The attack's artillery preparation had already started when word was received in Besch that Company K would be delayed. Lieutenant Clifford D. Morrison, artillery forward observer, asked that fire be

continued for an additional thirty minutes and this request was granted. Concurrently, smoke was laid along the south and west of Nennig to confuse the enemy as to the direction of the impending attack.

At 0745 hours Company K crossed the line of departure with the 1st Platoon on the right, the 2d on the left, and the 3d in support. Smoke laid by the artillery obscured the objectives and the attack did not go exactly as planned. Company K was to have taken Nennig while Company L bypassed it to seize Wies. In the confusion, the 2d Platoon of Company K, commanded by Lieutenant Dwight M. Morse; one platoon of machine guns under Technical Sergeant Leo P. Philbin; a section of 81mm mortars under Lieutenant King and a light machine gun section under Technical Sergeant Emmett R. Brown mistakenly advanced into Wies. Too late, this group realized their mistake. However, their absence did not minimize the sharpness of the attack on Nennig.

When Captain Way emerged from the smoke he made two startling discoveries. In leaving the LD he had veered to the north and was now facing the open country between Nennig and Wies. Also, his left assault platoon was missing. There was no time to attempt to locate Lieutenant Morse and his men. The only solution was to replace the left platoon with the support. This was done quickly and the attack was launched, not from the west as planned but from the north.

Imbued with a feeling of complete confidence and sure of success, the men of Company K came into Nennig on the run, shouting at the top of their lungs and shooting everything in sight. Despite the delayed start, surprise was complete. House after house was taken against little opposition for the Germans seemed to be anticipating an attack from the south. Twenty minutes after the leading infantryman dashed into Nennig, this objective was completely in American hands. Initially there was little or no enemy artillery fire brought on the town, though Besch, to the south, was being pounded heavily. However, intense machine-gun fire was being received from the north.

Only three casualties were suffered in accomplishing this portion of the battalion mission. Lieutenant James H. McCoy, leader of the 3d Platoon and the first man to cross the line of departure, was fatally wounded before entering the town. Twenty-three prisoners were taken and at least ninety-five casualties, both dead and wounded, were inflicted on the enemy. What remained of the enemy garrison withdrew toward Sinz on the run, pursued by American fire.

In Wies, Company K's 2d Platoon encountered stiff resistance from a German force of approximately fifty men who were garrisoning the town. Stubborn house to house fighting developed, in which the platoon leader was wounded and about a squad lost. Enemy machine guns emplaced in the row of buildings three hundred yards north of the town and just south of the Sinz-Bubingen road, directed intense and accurate fire against the attackers. During a lull in the firing, elements of the 2d Platoon attempted to cross the open fields north of Wies to silence these guns. When the leading scout was within fifty yards of the nearest house, the German gunners opened up, catching the attackers in a fire pattern of great intensity. The men hit the ground and attempted to maneuver, but the slightest movement drew increased fire which caused additional casualties.

Lieutenant King, who had set up his mortars in the center of Wies, when informed of the situation attempted to cover a withdrawal by smoking the area. This did not succeed as the wind so thinned the smoke it failed to obscure the vision of the enemy gunners. The mortars next resorted to HE despite the danger of possible shorts. Several rounds were planted on the roofs of the houses, but only one machine gun was knocked out in this manner. Other guns continued firing from the lower floors where the 81s could not reach them. Ammunition was beginning to run low and Lieutenant King was anxious to get into Nennig where he should have gone originally.

About this time, Captain Brightman arrived on the scene, attempting to learn the situation before deploying his company. With him was his leading platoon, commanded by Lieutenant William M. Golden-sweig. When he learned of the predicament of the men pinned down in front of Wies, the CO of Company L directed Lieutenant Golden-sweig to use his platoon in an attempt to relieve pressure on this group. Unfortunately, this proved impossible, as all approaches to the position were exposed to the grazing fire of the enemy's automatic weapons.

The Germans continued to fire whenever there was the slightest movement among the troops silhouetted against the snow. A number of men had been hit, but remained motionless despite their pain. Finally, a German officer and a medic carrying a white flag approached from the buildings and spoke to the men. He offered to allow the removal of the litter cases if the others would surrender. If not, the process of elimination would continue. Realizing the hopelessness of the situation and fearing the wounded would soon die if unattended, the men agreed. American medics carried off the seriously wounded

while the enemy led away the others. At 1530 hours, battalion received word that part of the 2d Platoon of Company K had been captured.

Back in Nennig, the other platoons of Company K organized the defenses of that town and set up a security outpost on the ridge to the east, at the edge of the woods. Repeatedly, German infantry within the woods probed this position. It was subjected to continuous mortar and artillery fire in the days that followed, and small enemy groups would infiltrate through it nightly to slip into Nennig. The possibility of this undermanned position being overwhelmed by counterattack was always present. However, the ridge had to be held or Nennig would become practically untenable and the whole battalion position would be jeopardized.

During the morning Lieutenant Raymond G. Fox's platoon of Company I was ordered forward from the battalion reserve position in Besch and attached to Company K. At 1000 hours, Captain Way ordered Lieutenant Fox to take a contact patrol to the 1st Battalion on the right. Lieutenant Thomas A. Daly, whose platoon was in position on the east of Nennig, decided to accompany the group as he was anxious to see the terrain over which an enemy attack would approach his position.

The patrol moved out in good order and crossed the high ground east of town, following the stream line along the north edge of the woods. After proceeding about eight hundred yards it discovered an enemy infantry position in the woods. The patrol leader estimated the German force at about fifty men and had his men open fire. This fire was returned promptly. Two machine guns were being employed against the patrol when Lieutenant Daly suggested that the rest of the party cover him while he worked his way along a shallow ditch which led toward the nearest gun. This was done and Lieutenant Daly crawled to a position immediately in front of the machine gun. A skillfully lobbed grenade killed two of the crew; Lieutenant Daly disposed of the remaining Germans with his pistol. He then withdrew under the covering fire of the patrol, bringing with him the German machine gun. Contact was broken and the patrol pulled back. A messenger sent to Captain Way with word of what had happened returned with orders for the group to return to Nennig.

By the time this party arrived in Nennig, orders had been received from battalion definitely specifying a time and place for contact with the 1st Battalion by means of patrol. Consequently, that afternoon Technical Sergeant Francis M. Fields led a second patrol whose mission

was to make contact with a party from Lieutenant Colonel Miner's battalion in the vicinity of a pillbox about midway between Nennig and Tettingen. South of the woods but north of the contact point, this group was engaged from the pillbox in question and the series of communication trenches surrounding it. There was no sign of the 1st Battalion patrol and Sergeant Fields led his men back to Nennig.

Upon his own suggestion, Lieutenant Fox took his platoon, on this same mission after dark. Advancing to the vicinity of the pillbox, the platoon was engaged by automatic-weapons fire and hand grenades as they ran into an antipersonnel minefield. For thirty minutes the platoon fought without making any headway. Then, a runner dispatched to Captain Way returned with word to abandon the attempt. Lieutenant Fox and his men withdrew to Nennig where they set up a defensive position for the night.

When the men of Company L took over the assault of Wies, they were repeatedly delayed by enemy machine guns emplaced in the northwest section of town. Artillery fire brought to bear on the fortified buildings housing these weapons greatly assisted the advance, but it was not until late in the afternoon that the town was finally cleared. Strong rifle and machine-gun positions were hastily prepared covering the approaches from the north, northeast and southeast, and antitank mines were placed across the road facing the enemy. Following these preparations, a platoon from Company L moved on Berg, which fell at about 1730 hours. This completed the attack phase of the battalion mission.

For communication, reliance was placed on both wire and radio. The latter performed extremely well, but the volume of traffic fell to the field telephones. Lines between regiment and battalion were maintained effectively by teams from Colonel McClune's headquarters. Forward of Besch, the lines were a battalion responsibility; here difficulties increased a hundredfold. These lines were constantly going out due to heavy enemy shelling.

Early on the morning of the 15th, before the attack began, Lieutenant Inman E. Mallard and Staff Sergeant Gladwin J. Flory, battalion intelligence sergeant, crossed the Moselle into Luxembourg on the ferry which the Division engineers were operating below Besch. They proceeded into Remich and there selected a site for an observation post which Sergeant Flory was to man. The high ground on this side of the river gave complete observation of the battle area from Thorn to Sinz





Luxembourg . . . The Moselle . . . Germany. Looking upstream from the vicinity of Rettel toward Sierck and Apach

and south from this line to Tettingen. Every move made by the enemy in Nennig was visible from this OP. From this location numerous fire missions were conducted and valuable G-2 information was obtained. It had been planned to man the position for only one day, but due to its importance the observation post was kept in operation until the 19th of January.

Originally the Besch-Nennig road proved impracticable as a supply route. Enemy artillery was accurately zeroed on it, it was known to be mined and during daylight hours it was under direct observation and fire from the pillboxes to the east. Hence, the route of the attacking companies had to be used initially for the resupply of the 3d Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston personally led the first forty-man carrying party, composed of men from the A&P Platoon, Company M and the regimental Antitank Company which brought up ammunition, medical supplies, wire and some K rations the first night. These were dumped at the railroad tracks, west of Nennig, where distribution was made to details sent back by the rifle companies.

Because of the size of the town, Company K found it impossible to garrison every house in Nennig. All night long, enemy patrols were active and repeatedly they seized unoccupied buildings. Captain Way, Lieutenant Ralph C. Brown, and Lieutenant Hodges, with the aid of personnel from company headquarters were kept busy driving out groups of *Wehrmacht* intruders.

At 2130 hours, the battalion reserve was ordered into Nennig; as soon as it arrived, Company I took over positions in the southern and western portions of town. This greatly strengthened the battalion's defenses. The following morning Lieutenant Fox's platoon was returned to the control of Company I.

During the early morning hours of January 16, 1945, enemy mortar and artillery fire on Berg increased. Behind a barrage, estimated conservatively at two artillery battalions, came the first real counterattack. A force of about one hundred infantrymen had worked up the wooded draw east of the town, then deployed in the darkness. Yelling threats and insults in English, they attempted to storm the *Schloss*. Severe hand-to-hand fighting followed and the situation remained utterly confused for almost two hours. During the fighting, one of the machine guns attached to Lieutenant Dale E. Bowyer's platoon was lost and a rifle squad captured. Later this squad escaped and returned unharmed. Finally the enemy withdrew leaving behind some sixty of their dead.

An hour after the start of the enemy attack on Berg, heavy mortar and artillery fire on Nennig ushered in the second counterattack of



*Carrying party in Nennig*

the morning. It developed from the draw leading to Sinz and was hurled against Lieutenant Daly's position. Men of Company M, manning machine guns facing the draw, first discovered the enemy and alerted the rifle platoon. This attack closely resembled the attempt on Berg. Shouting as they came the Germans closed on the run. When the enemy was almost on top of them, Lieutenant Daly's men opened fire; the forward impetus of the German attack came to an abrupt halt. At the same time, Lieutenant King placed a mortar concentration behind the attackers, cutting off their escape along the draw which they had used as a route of approach. Those of the enemy who were not killed, surrendered, and the *Wehrmacht* had one less platoon.

The same night, Staff Sergeant Fred Grossi was on guard at a light machine gun in Nennig when a group of Germans, running in close column, burst into view shouting *Heil Hitler!* Sergeant Grossi sprang for his LMG and squeezed the trigger. Two rounds ripped out, then the gun jammed. Grabbing a rifle, the sergeant pumped eight quick shots into the group and stepped back into the shelter of a doorway to reload. While he was firing his second clip, other weapons took up the fight. The charge came to naught. Morning found fourteen dead Supermen cluttering the street; twelve of this group were officers.

With the coming of daylight, the artillery and mortar fire on Nennig

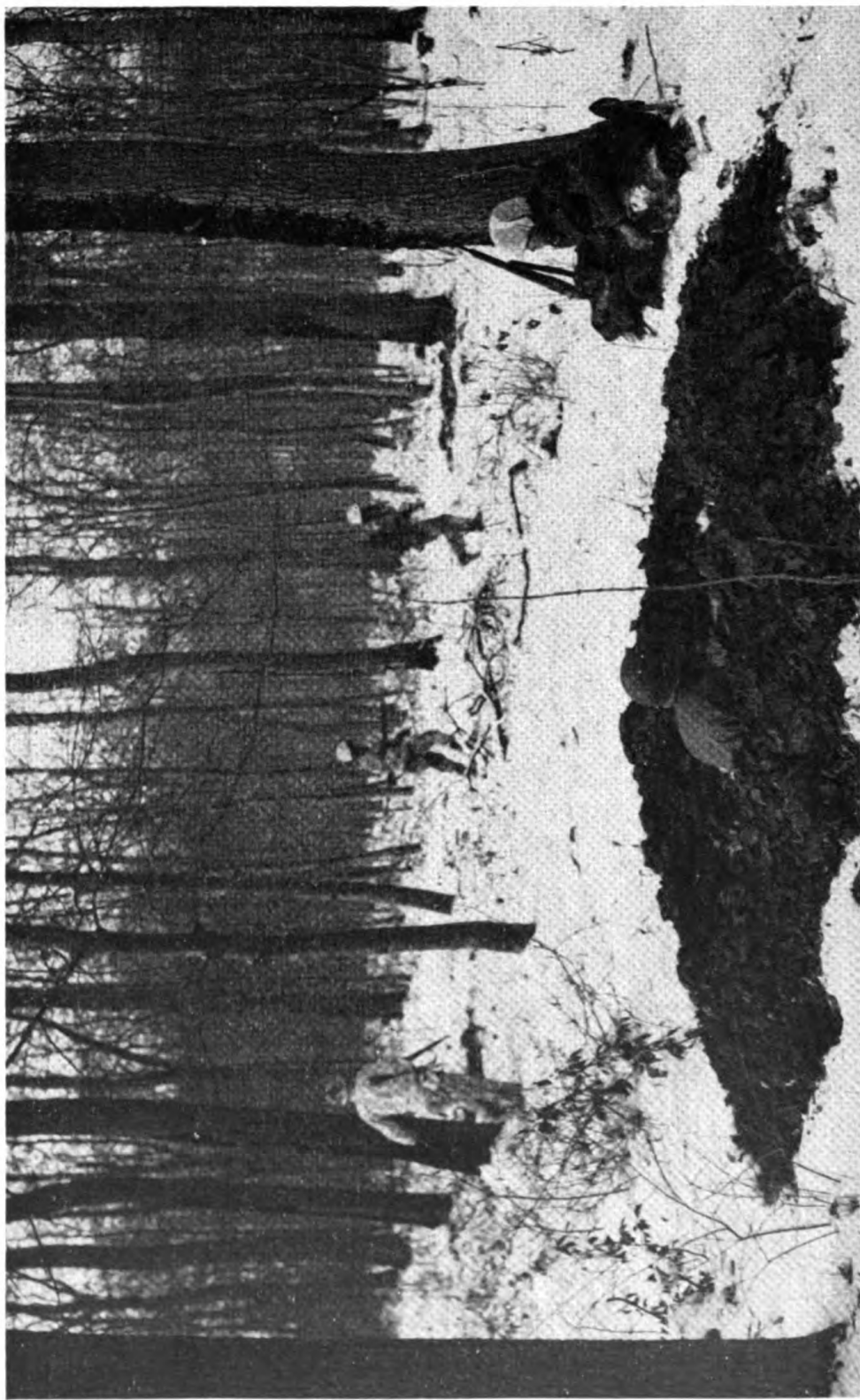
again increased. This heralded another attack in which about two platoons were employed. It was spotted at about the same time by Staff Sergeant Leroy McPherson's heavy machine guns on the ridge north of town and the OP in Luxembourg. The HMGs broke up the attack and the survivors took refuge in the woods east of Nennig. Before the attack was repulsed however, a German machine-gun crew broke through the defenses and set up their gun within fifty yards of the battalion forward command post. Here they went into action firing down the main street. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston, using an M1, killed the machine gunner and wounded a German bazookaman who was working into position to knock out one of the tank destroyers in the vicinity of the CP.

On the morning of January 16, 1945, the 2d Battalion, 376th, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Olivius C. Martin, was directed to launch an attack on the woods southwest of Tettingen. Object of this thrust was to eliminate the enemy positions in rear of the inner flanks of the two narrow salients driven into the Siegfried Switch Line by the 1st and 3d Battalions. This would consolidate the position and relieve some of the pressure constantly being brought to bear on the captured towns.

At the same time, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston was directed to extend his right flank to the east to establish contact with the left of the 2d Battalion. Toward this end, Company I moved from Nennig at 1330 hours on the day of the attack, in column of platoons. The 2d, 1st and 4th Platoons took positions, in that order, in the communication trenches leading out of Nennig, while the 3d Platoon dug positions in the orchard midway between Nennig and Tettingen. To the rear of the company were numerous pillboxes, bunkers and mortar positions still manned by the enemy. From the latter Company I was shelled constantly; as time passed casualties began to mount.

Lieutenant Colonel Martin's attack jumped off as scheduled with Companies F and G in the assault. The ground was rough, heavily wooded and infested with enemy positions, but by noon most of the area had been cleared. From a pair of pillboxes southeast of Lieutenant Fox's position in the orchard, Company F took fifty-two prisoners. It was learned that these boxes were used as an aid station and rest bunker, respectively. Also taken in this general mop-up was an ammunition dump and several machine guns.

During the afternoon, the assault companies of the 2d Battalion continued forward and Companies I and G established the desired



*Wearing improvised snow suits, a patrol moves into the woods in the Wechern-Tettingen area*

contact when a rifleman of the former company crawled over to the left flank of the 2d Battalion.

During this period, the heavy machine guns on the ridge north of Nennig were receiving a good deal of attention from the enemy artillery which attempted to soften up the area for its infantry. Six times German combat patrols tried to overrun these positions; six times they were beaten back.

On the night of the 16th, the forward echelon of the 3d Battalion command post moved into Nennig. To provide wire communication with regiment, a crew led by Staff Sergeant James L. Jennings laid a line from Perl across the Moselle, south of Besch, and up the west bank of the river. Opposite Nennig the wire team recrossed the ice-filled river in an assault boat manned by engineers. The detail was shelled roundly before it left the Luxembourg shore and while it was in mid-stream. As the engineers paddled, weighted wire was paid out by the wireman. When the crew reached the east bank of the river, it continued the line to the battalion CP. Here a telephone was connected and a test call made. The line functioned.

At 0430 hours the morning of the 17th, the wire team started back to Perl, after several postponements caused by the intense artillery fire descending on the town. When the tired but satisfied crew finally reported at regiment, they received the disheartening news that their line had gone out while they were returning. The following day, the problem of wire communications to the 3d Battalion was solved by Technician Fourth Grade Mervin L. Moore and Staff Sergeant Delbert A. Larson when they laid a line straight up the railroad tracks into Nennig, using the rails to protect the wire from the constant artillery and mortar fire. This line remained in service for a record length of time.

Lieutenant Colonel Thurston next received orders to reduce the pill-boxes in the area behind Company I. The 2d Platoon of that company was assigned the mission and Lieutenant Pablo Arenaz made a detailed reconnaissance. He reported to the battalion commander that he did not believe he could accomplish this mission with the force available, as his platoon numbered only eighteen men.

Consequently, the assignment was given to Lieutenant Ravel V. Burgamy's 1st Platoon. The platoon was divided into two assault groups and all available flame throwers, pole and satchel charges were gathered. At 2030 hours this assault force moved out. The eight hundred yards of open ground that lay between the attackers and the deep



draw one hundred yards in front of the first pillbox, were crossed without incident. There they discovered that, despite the efforts of the gunners, ice had formed in the light machine guns; the weapons were useless. Only functioning automatic weapon was the one BAR with the group.

Taking Private First Class John Mauro, Jr., with him, Lieutenant Burgamy left the main party in the draw while he went forward. When close to the pillbox, the two men encountered a number of trip wires and halted. As previously planned, the BAR and rifles opened up. This fire was returned by the enemy, not from the pillbox, but from several positions around it. The pillbox sent up signal flares and shortly thereafter both mortar and artillery fire landed on the platoon. Private First Class Ray Sweeny, the BAR-man, was ordered to cover a withdrawal and the platoon pulled back. Informed of the situation, the battalion commander, after personally investigating, ordered Lieutenant Burgamy to make no further attempt on the pillbox.

During the night of the 16th-17th enemy patrols were active, probing the entire battalion front. Company L, with the assistance of the artillery, broke up an enemy attack before midnight, inflicting some twenty casualties. About 0500 hours, a large German patrol attempted to enter Berg from the northeast but was stopped in its tracks by Lieutenant Bowyer's platoon. In Wies, Private First Class James F. Johnston of Company L was hit by a shell fragment while manning the company OP. He refused to quit his post until relief arrived. The following day he died of wounds.

Early on the morning of the 17th, one of Lieutenant Fox's men reported enemy infantry in a column of twos approaching the position, across the open ground in front of the orchard. The platoon was alerted and instructions given to hold fire until the Germans were within fifty yards. Apparently unaware of the presence of the Americans, the column continued to advance, presumably heading for the pillbox area to the southwest. At the designated time, fire was brought to bear and a number of the enemy fell. The remainder of the group withdrew in disorder to the woods where they re-formed. A frontal assault followed which provided the 3d Platoon with even better targets. Subsequent attacks were launched from slightly different positions, in waves of twenty-five men. These thrusts continued until about 1100 hours the following morning; all attacks were beaten back before the enemy was able to get within grenade range.

Being unable to take the position by storm, some of the Germans infiltrated through the thin strip of woods between the 3d and 4th

Platoons. They set up machine guns to the left front and rear of the platoon position, preventing reinforcement or resupply and rendering counterattack on the part of Lieutenant Fox's men out of the question. Soon this developed into an all-around siege. The telephone wire was cut, and one of the two men sent to repair it was killed while the other returned without being able to splice the line.

Late in the afternoon, two figures were seen crawling toward the platoon's rear. Between them, they alternately pushed and pulled a wooden box. Uncertain of the identity of the pair, Lieutenant Fox's men allowed them to advance but kept them under close observation. Much to the surprise of the platoon, the pair turned out to be Lieutenant Colonel Thurston and his driver, Technician Fifth Grade Thomas M. Clausi. The box was a C ration crate which was half full; a welcome addition to the larder. The battalion commander informed the platoon that he had drawn no fire in coming forward and instructed Lieutenant Fox that under no circumstances was the position to be yielded to the enemy. Before leaving, the CO made the platoon leader a present of the bandoleer of .30-caliber ammunition he was carrying. After this, the position was attacked by several light combat patrols, all of which were repulsed.

Meanwhile, living in the captured towns continued as uncomfortable and dangerous as ever. Enemy machine-gun, mortar and artillery fire was relentless, continuing night and day. Nightly enemy patrols managed to infiltrate the position. In Wies, Captain Brightman ordered all men of his command to remain indoors during the hours of darkness and arranged to have time fire descend on the town periodically, in an attempt to discourage German curiosity.

In Nennig, the number of enemy dead had become quite a problem. As frequent combat patrols were driven out and infiltrating groups were hunted down, the number of corpses increased. Since there was no possible way of evacuating these bodies, they were collected and laid out neatly in one of the houses. (Later the enemy retook this building. Berlin Sally reported these German dead were prisoners of war murdered in cold blood and dubbed the 94th "Roosevelt's Butchers.")

On the 17th at approximately 1000 hours, Lieutenant Daly observed twenty Germans approaching his positions along the draw to the east. When the Germans had closed to within seventy-five yards, Lieutenant Daly decided to test his limited knowledge of the German language. From the shelter of a doorway he called, "*Kommen sie hier.*" The officer leading the patrol hesitated, but when his aide handed him a



*Nennig was littered with dead Krauts*

rifle, Lieutenant Daly's men decided it was time for some shooting. Those of the enemy who were not downed in the first volley, dashed for the shelter of town. They took refuge in a couple of unoccupied buildings from which they were driven by a tank destroyer firing at point-blank range.

The remainder of the 17th passed in comparative quiet. Artillery and mortar shells fell on all three towns on an average of about two rounds per minute. However, this was a relief compared to the volume of incoming mail that had been received the first two days. Supply and communications continued troublesome. Enemy patrol activity was light and successfully driven back.

With the coming of darkness it began to rain. The night was as dark as the inside of a goat and a sharp wind whipped through the near-freezing rain. It was an ideal night for patrolling and the enemy capitalized on this opportunity. The entire battalion front was probed but there was no successful penetration. For the men of Company I the night was particularly uncomfortable. In the woods east of Nennig, the rain-soaked men drove back patrol after patrol that tried to drive them from their water filled communication trenches and muddy fox-holes in the orchard. However, there was no way of completely avoid-

ing the murderous mortar and artillery fire that constantly pounded their positions.

The following day an assault team from Company G, under Lieutenant Edward G. Litka, attacked two of the pillboxes that had repulsed Company I's offensive. About one hundred yards in front of these boxes was a tank trap which afforded a covered route of approach. The assault force advanced through the woods, entered the tank ditch and moved up it to a point opposite their objective. There they mounted two light machine guns plus a pair of BARs atop the ditch. The automatic weapons, firing in conjunction with the tank destroyers in the edge of the woods, kept the pillboxes buttoned-up and permitted two riflemen carrying satchel charges to move forward. These men had not advanced more than twenty-five yards though, when mortar shells began exploding in their immediate vicinity. So well zeroed were the mortars, they were able to walk up and down the antitank ditch in addition to covering the area in front of the bunkers. This intense and accurate fire forced the withdrawal of the detail. Of the eighteen-man assault group, one man was killed and nine wounded.

During the day of the 18th, there were continued reports of German tanks in the area. Enemy wire parties were observed laying new lines from pillboxes to OPs and the observation post in Luxembourg reported large-scale troop movements to the north. All indications pointed to an early counterattack in strength.

At approximately 1430 hours, Berg and Wies were deluged with a fifteen-minute barrage of enemy artillery conservatively estimated at four battalions. When this fire lifted, the towns were hit from the east and north by a battalion attack. All telephone lines were out and the artillery observer's radio had been destroyed. Captain Brightman conducted his artillery support by means of an SCR-300 channeled to the OP in Luxembourg from whence messages were relayed to an artillery liaison officer in Besch. This fire so effectively whittled down the attacking force that the machine gunners and riflemen in these towns were able to repel easily the survivors.

Lieutenant Colonel Thurston concluded his After Action Report on this phase of the fighting with these words:

By 1700 the last living German had loped back across the ridges and the attack had failed . . . I judge that a full strength battalion attacked Berg and Wies . . . some three hundred dead or wounded remained on the snow-covered fields when the last shot had been fired. Moans and cries of the wounded were plainly audible from both towns.



*A position of the 465th AAA Battalion at Veckring*

The night of the 18-19th passed quietly. Apparently the Germans were even more exhausted than the men of the 3d Battalion, though they were close to the breaking point and only a few were free of some touch of frostbite or trench foot. Company I had suffered the largest share of casualties and had barely enough effectives to outpost its extended front. It was rumored that relief was coming. Grimly the battalion hung on.

Evacuation of wounded to Besch at first proved slow. Captain John J. Ryan, battalion surgeon, knew his aid men were doing a magnificent job, but early felt that he was too far back. Consequently, he obtained permission to move an aid station into Nennig. With him came Technician Third Grade Frank Mahar and two others. Ceaselessly these medics worked on the constant stream of wounded passing through their station. Their tireless efforts saved many lives, American and German.

On the night of the 17th when the first truck to run the Besch-Nennig road arrived with ammunition, it was quickly unloaded and the more seriously wounded were taken out on the return trip. Other wounded were carried by litter squads across the railroad tracks to the river. Here they were loaded on wheeled litters and pushed into Besch over the route used by the assault companies the first morning. This was a slow, back-breaking haul and of necessity a jeep was soon employed over part of the route. From Besch the wounded were transported to the collecting station operated by Company C, 319th Medics, in Sierck, and then passed back to the clearing company at Veckring.

## Chapter 15: TETTINGEN COUNTERATTACK

ON JANUARY 15, 1945, when Colonel McClune ordered his 1st and 3d Battalions to establish contact by patrols, at a pillbox located about midway between Tettingen and Nennig, a ten-man patrol from Company C was dispatched to contact the group from the 3d Battalion, led by Technical Sergeant Francis M. Fields of Company I. The Company C patrol proceeded west, through the woods, to the vicinity of the Tettingen–Nennig road. Here they encountered *Schmeisser* and rifle fire and detoured to the south. Again enemy automatic weapons and rifle fire were encountered. By skillful maneuver, the group finally worked its way to a point some fifty yards short of the appointed box where they were subjected to an intense mortar barrage. They remained in observation a short time; then withdrew. At the same time, Sergeant Fields and his men, unaware of the presence of the 1st Battalion patrol, were receiving similar treatment from the enemy fifty yards to the north of this pillbox. Desired contact was not made.

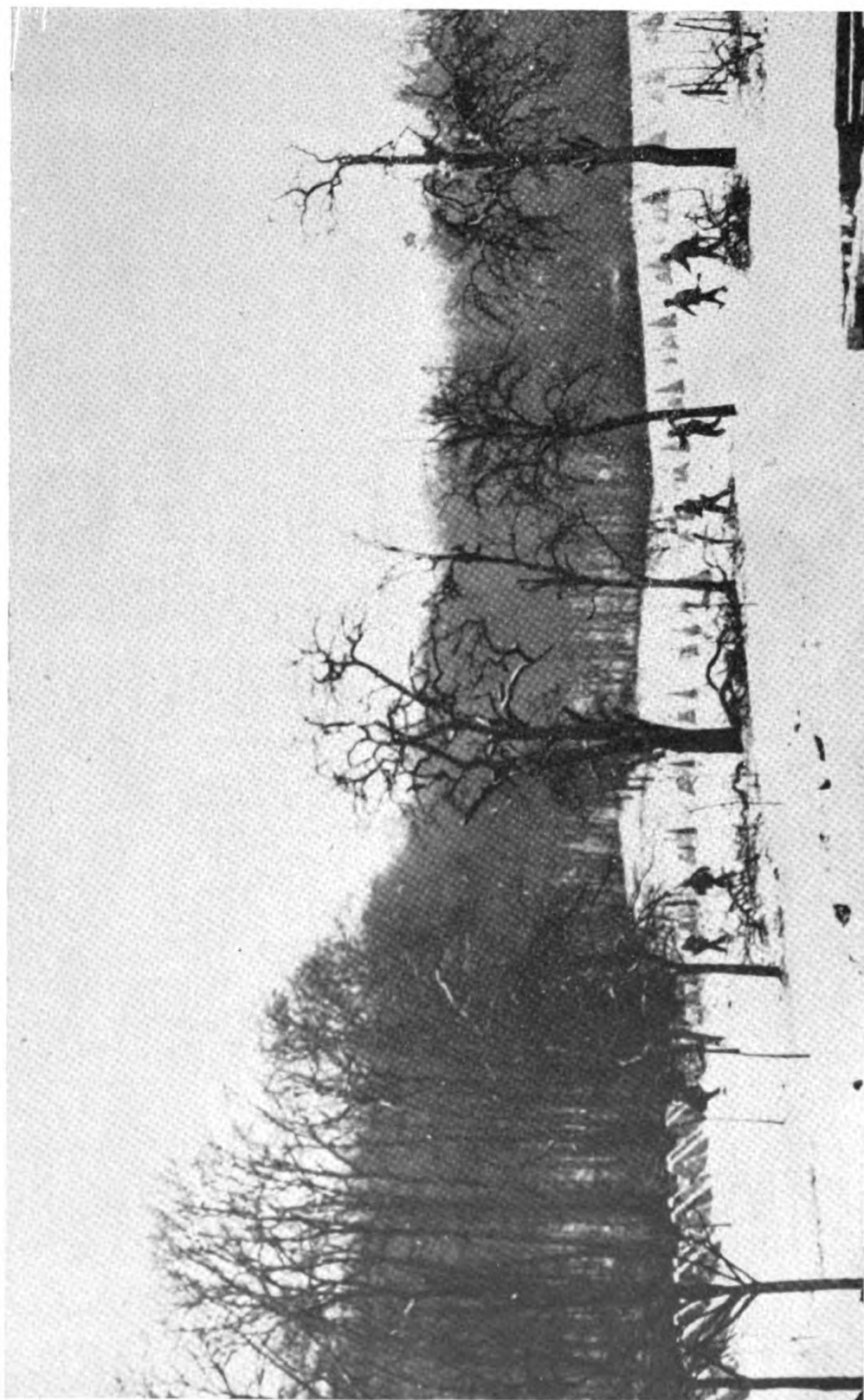
There were two small counterattacks on the evening of the 15th. The first of these was directed against Company B and was soon beaten back for in this attack not more than fifty Germans were involved. Following this, Company C stopped an enemy infantry thrust, supported by four Mark IV tanks. Bazookas were employed effectively; two of the armored vehicles retired, trailing smoke behind them. As the bazooka teams warmed to their job, the remaining tanks elected to withdraw for the greater number of their supporting infantry had been either killed or wounded by the volume of fire brought to bear from the battalion's rifles, automatic weapons, mortars and supporting artillery.

This same night Lieutenant Chalkley sent a reconnaissance patrol under Sergeant Soka to investigate the area to the east of the platoon's position. This group reported the location of one pillbox whose sector of fire was in the direction of Butzdorf. In the vicinity of this box there were several concrete bunkers. Both these and the pillbox were occupied, as voices had been heard from within.

In Wochern, Lieutenant William P. Springer decided to change the position of his 81s as they were drawing too much fire. Scarcely had the guns been moved when an artillery shell scored a direct hit on the evacuated site. One man who had remained in the vicinity was wounded.

Wochern itself resembled a boom town; the streets of this village hummed with activity. Tank destroyers, two-and-a-halves, weapons carriers and jeeps passed through, milled around or jockeyed for position.





*Well dispersed, a relief party moves into the woods west of Tettingen*

Signalmen festooned the fronts of the buildings with wire while staff and supply echelons went about their various duties indoors. The streets swarmed with men and machines until the first whine of incoming artillery or rocket fire was heard; then, in fractions of a second, they became deserted except for the vehicles. In the rifleman's sense of the term Wochern was rear-area, but nine men were killed and twenty-four wounded in the town during the days immediately following the attack of the 1st Battalion.

For Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men the 16th proved a quiet day. Intermittent artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire fell on the towns but there was no attempt on the part of the enemy to recoup losses. To the west could be heard the noise of the 2d Battalion's attack in the woods.

During the night, Lieutenant James W. Cornelius, accompanied by Sergeant Jesse R. Tower of the 319th Engineers, led a patrol whose mission was to blow the pillbox and bunkers located the previous night. The box was found unoccupied and a thousand pounds of nitro-starch were hauled forward and installed. At the touch of the engineers, the dome blew clear and the sides crumbled. Of the bunkers only one was found to be occupied; against its steel door, two of Sergeant Tower's men laid a 150-pound satchel charge. When detonated, this charge completely demolished the door, but the patrol's activity brought down a mortar barrage and it was decided to wait until morning to check the damage done.

With the coming of daylight, the doorless bunker was clearly visible from the front line. A German medic, accompanied by another soldier, entered town shortly after dawn, under a white flag, and requested permission to remove the wounded from the bunker. This was granted, but the soldier accompanying the aid man was detained. A short time later, a German half-track approached over the hill; seven wounded were carried out of the bunker and loaded into this vehicle.

About noon, Company B was withdrawn from Tettingen and went into position in the woods west of the town. There they relieved Company F which had helped clear this sector the previous day. Captain Henry C. Bowden placed his three rifle platoons on line, along the 1,000 yard front for which his company was responsible. Fifteen hundred yards off the left flank of the company were the five pillboxes still held by the enemy. To the northwest, in Nennig, was the 3d Battalion with Lieutenant Fox's platoon of Company I holding its right flank. Lieutenant Fox, in the orchard, was approximately five

hundred yards northwest of Company B's left. Contact was to be made between the two battalions by these flank units.

German radio broadcasts from the Berlin station on the night of the 17th told of heavy fighting in the vicinity of Remich and intimated that there was more to come. This was both a threat and a promise, for the II Battalion of the 714th Grenadier Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Reudiger, had crossed the Saar and assumed a defensive position along the ridge south of Sinz. In addition, General Wend von Wietersheim's 11th Panzer Division was on the way. The 11th had been out of contact since the middle of December while it was being refitted in the vicinity of Bitburg. Its 15th Tank Regiment had received a considerable number of new Panthers and Mark IVs, which brought the unit's total strength in panzers to almost 100 vehicles. A great number of replacements had been integrated into the 110th Panzergrenadier Regiment, which suffered heavily in the battle for Metz. Having sustained considerably fewer casualties, the 111th Panzergrenadiers were given many less replacements. The Antitank Battalion had been equipped with sixteen low-slung assault guns, while the I Battalion of the 110th and the engineer companies of both regiments had been mounted on half-tracks.

American tactical reconnaissance planes had picked up traces of the 11th Panzer's crossing north of Saarburg the previous day, and G-2 had alerted all elements of the Division against surprise by enemy armor. On the 17th, overcast skies prevented continued aerial reconnaissance; exact whereabouts of the Germans' Ghost Division was unknown.

On the heels of this alert, the sound of track-laying vehicles was heard along the front of the 376th Infantry. Extensive antitank precautions were taken and extra supplies of bazooka ammunition were brought forward and issued. Lieutenant Palmer and his engineers laid mines along the road leading into Butzdorf and strung a belt of mines along the east side of Tettingen. Daisy chains, pole and satchel charges were prepared and placed in readiness.

About midnight tanks were heard in the vicinity of Campholz Woods; two or three track-laying vehicles seemed to be jockeying for position just outside Butzdorf. The battalion waited, watched and listened. Then at 0300 hours, a patrol from Company A returned with two prisoners who were readily identified as members of the Ghost Division.

At dawn of the 18th the storm broke. For twenty minutes 80mm, 88mm, 105mm, 120mm and 150mm shells deluged the towns of Butz-



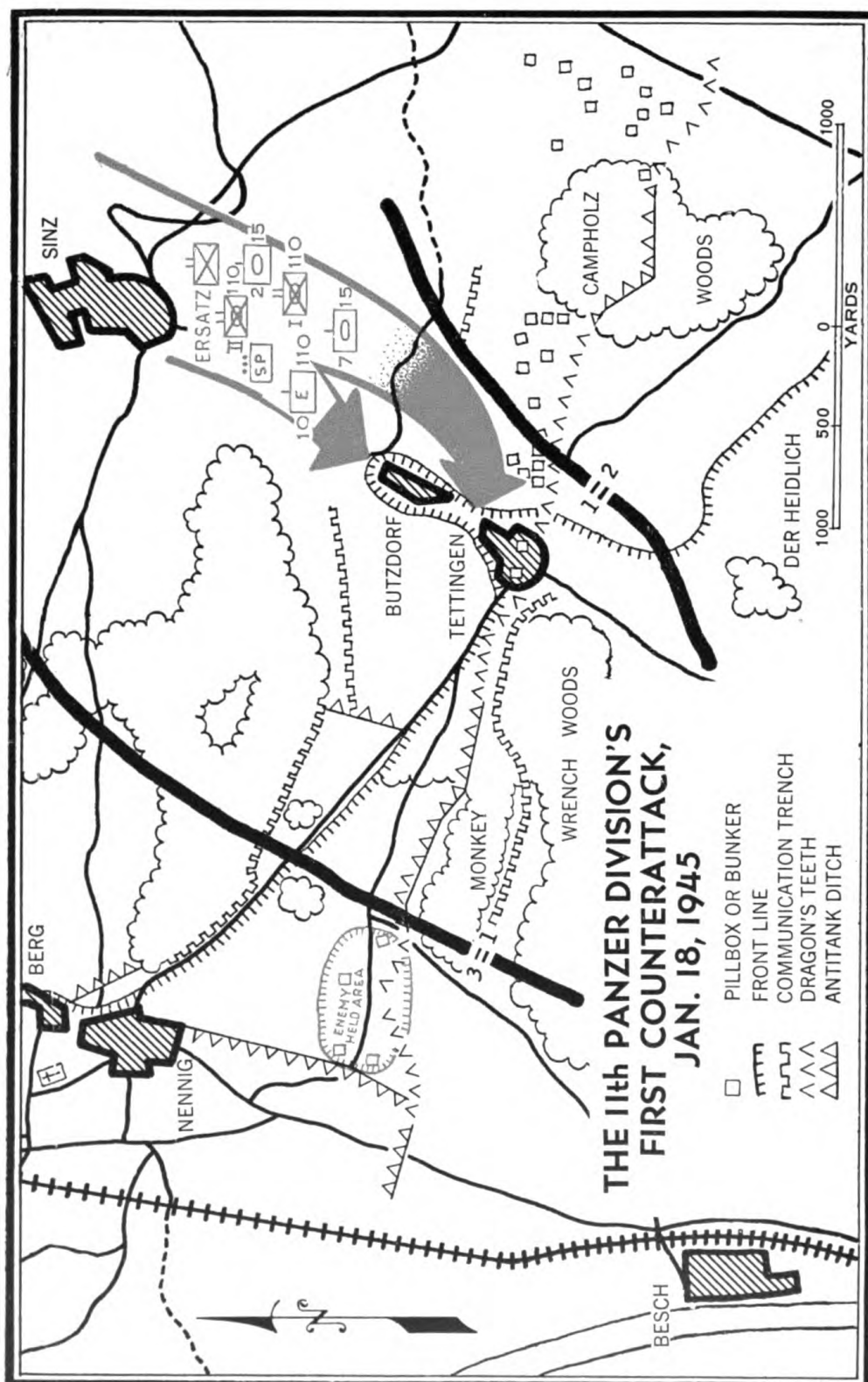
*Lace-curtain camouflage*

dorf, Tettingen and Wochern. Geysers of dirt flew up from the streets as snow, mud and jagged steel fragments ripped through the air. This shelling rose to a deafening crescendo and seemed to remain there. The already shattered towns were worked over by past masters at the art of destruction. Roofs fell and walls crumbled, as the towns were beaten a bit closer to the earth.

Then at 0740 hours the German preparation subsided; the roar of artillery was replaced by the sound of tank motors. Overhead could be heard the rustling whir and the following "crumph" that was Division Artillery's answer to the enemy barrage.

From the north and east came a long line of men and vehicles, advancing astride the Wochern-Sinz road. General von Wietersheim was sending his Panzergrenadiers to seize and hold Tettingen and Butzdorf at all cost. Led by elements of the 10th (Engineer) Company, mounted on their half-tracks, the I Battalion of the 110th Grenadier Regiment swarmed down the slopes toward Butzdorf. Supporting the Grenadiers were four self-propelled 75mm guns of the LXI Antitank Battalion plus several Mark IV tanks from the 7th Company of the 15th Tank Regiment. Despite defensive artillery fire which hurled tons of screaming steel into the face of the enemy, the Grenadiers rolled forward in a giant arc. As the right of the attack hit Butzdorf, the left flank swung to the west and jabbed at Tettingen.

Company A in Butzdorf received the first blow. An assault gun,



attempting to enter town, hit the engineers' minefield and stayed there. Two half-tracks loaded with Germans tried to maneuver around the gun and were knocked out by bazooka fire. One of Lieutenant Hodges' men on the east side of town, disposed of a self-propelled gun whose muzzle was thrust into the window of his house. When the crew of this vehicle and their supporting infantry attempted to dismount, they were made prisoners and herded into a cellar until things quieted down. But, despite the efforts of the men of Company A, the Grenadiers managed to occupy two lightly defended houses on the north side of Butzdorf.

Meanwhile, the left flank of the attack hit Tettingen. The men of Company C on the east of town had been watching the Germans roll toward them and were ready for the Grenadiers when they came. Four half-tracks, two tanks and a self-propelled gun swung into position about one hundred yards from town. One of the half-tracks hit a mine; its crew and infantry leaped to the ground for cover. Private Thomas H. Goggins greeted one of the tanks with a bazooka round into the bogie wheels. This halted the panzer, but the bazooka-man was unable to silence its gun. Behind the church the remaining tank maneuvered into position and secured a field of fire by blasting a hole through the wall of this building. Time after time, bazooka rounds were fired at the half-tracks but for some reason they failed to detonate. In front of Lieutenant Chalkley's position, the half-tracks pulled up broadside and the infantry began to dismount. Privates James C. Hobbs and Charles F. Croan each seized a machine gun from its tripod. They went to work on the alighting Grenadiers, most of whom never managed to get very far from their vehicles.

When the disabled tank directed its fire into and through Lieutenant Chalkley's platoon command post, the platoon leader decided it was time to pick up and move. Across the street was a barn which seemed a bit more habitable, and, at 0900 hours, Lieutenant Chalkley and his messenger withdrew to this position, bringing their telephone with them. The second panzer then began firing into the battalion CP. This tank also scored a hit on one of Lieutenant Peters' prime movers while his 57s were going into position. Immediately afterward both Lieutenant Peters and his platoon sergeant, Joseph J. Quentz were wounded by an 88 and had to be evacuated. Sergeant Charles Foxgrover became convinced that if he put his 57 into position to the south of town, on the east of the road, he might be able to knock out the tank that was hammering away at the battalion command post. A TD man standing nearby asked the sergeant, "What can you do



with a 57? Why it's suicide!" Nevertheless, Foxgrover decided to make the attempt. His gun squad ran their weapon into position and opened fire at three hundred yards. The tank was knocked out before it could turn its turret and bring its own gun into firing position. As the crew of the 57 struggled to take their gun out of action, a German mortar round landed among them. Most of the crew were wounded and the trails of the piece were jammed.

Meanwhile, the attacking Grenadiers had succeeded in taking the halfway houses and three or four buildings on the northeast of Tettingen. They secured Lieutenant Chalkley's old command post and German machine-gun crews were soon sniping at all individuals who attempted to cross the main street in Tettingen. In Butzdorf the tanks had penetrated to the center of town and were firing their 88s point-blank into the buildings still held by Company A. The situation appeared desperate, but the company continued its determined resistance. Individual panzers were buttoned up with small-arms fire; then, bazookas and satchel charges were effectively employed.

Private First Class Richard J. Kamins of the 2d Platoon of Company A continues the account.

I stood in the doorway and saw the first tank go by me. I fired at the second and yelled, "I got the sonuvabitch!" Lindsay reloaded. The next tank came down the street toward me. I hit him in the track. He saw me. I turned and ran down the hall. A spray of machine-gun bullets chased me, ricocheting from where I'd been standing at the door. After that I fired from a window.

A fourth came and a fifth. It was too dark to use my sights but I couldn't miss. They were only fifty yards away. I hit them in the tracks but still they kept coming. I hit one on the turret and the round bounced off like a tennis ball. I set one on fire and he withdrew in a sheet of flame.

Pop Huston crouched in a doorway. Some concrete dust blasted from the walls got in his eyes. Nevertheless, old Pop fired every rifle grenade he had. He hit tank after tank and watched the rounds glance off. His language was lovely to hear.

The 1st Squad was across the street. Jack Zebin and Wylie of the 3d Platoon were attached to them as a bazooka team. Zebin had a tank graveyard in front of his position. He got credit for five. Dick Schweig and Whiz Wicentowski were to my left, and "The Reverend" Pillow and Howard Curler were down to my right. We had a nice box formation. One tank that I'd hit in the tread went down to be mouse-trapped by Pillow. Pillow scared him back to me. He was in reverse swinging his gun toward the 1st Squad's building. Simultaneously, Zebin and I hit him. My round tore a three-by-four hole in the rear armor. It was a long-range shot . . . all of five yards. The driver and gunner lay dead in the tank. A third was hanging out of the turret like a tablecloth. A fourth started to run. Cross fire from three buildings hit him. With every burst his body would jump, making us think he was still alive. Other bursts followed. McIntyre came running up with a satchel charge and dropped it in

the tank. The explosion was terrific. Later we examined the smoking hulk. There was no sign of any bodies.

Then there was a short lull. Faber, Odell and Bridgeman had been looking out the back window. They had seen no tanks, only artillery landing. Bridgeman was leaning on a sink. Then a close one dropped. When the dust cleared Faber asked where the sink was. Bridgeman couldn't answer but the sink had disappeared.

Jim had the GIs that day. He was too busy to step to the gents' room during the festivities and the worst happened. About seven of us gathered around in a Mayo Clinic circle. Jim dropped his pants. Two men cut off his long drawers with a trench knife. It looked like a major operation. Messy business.

Shortly after 0900 hours, the attack spent itself and the Grenadiers withdrew to lick their wounds and reorganize. The 110th had great trouble preparing for another attack as the fire of several battalions of American artillery constantly pounded and harassed them. At 1045 hours, elements of the II Battalion of the 110th tried to attack and were stopped dead in their tracks by artillery fire. The 7th Company was so badly disorganized by the Division's 105s and 155s, it could not be used all day. From their positions in the woods the men of Company B could see the enemy some two hundred yards north of them, across the clearing, attempting to form for these new attacks. Against them they directed a steady and telling volume of fire.

Once the first attack was beaten back, Company A regained the buildings it had lost while Company C took sixteen prisoners in and around the halfway house. The POWs were promptly interrogated as the higher-level G-2s were most anxious for information regarding the 11th Panzer.

At 1130 hours the next attack came when General von Wietersheim sent his 2d Tank Company from the direction of Sinz, against Tettingen and Butzdorf. The company consisted of about ten Mark Vs and these moved in a huge arc on the two towns. Four of the tanks assumed a hull defilade position on the hill east of Tettingen, while the others moved about among the trees and haystacks north of Butzdorf. When the tankers had reached the desired positions, they began pounding the towns with both armor-piercing and high-explosive shells. As the projectiles came crashing through the walls and exploded within the buildings of Butzdorf, Company A crawled into the cellars leaving one man in each building to watch for enemy infantry who might attempt to advance under the protective fire of the tanks.

In Tettingen, Lieutenant Colonel Miner and his staff racked their brains to devise some method of relieving the pressure on Butzdorf. Division artillery continued its protective fires while Lieutenant Niel-



*Brigadier General Louis J. Fortier, CG, 94th Division Artillery, decorates Staff Sergeant Homer L. Prewitt of the 356th Field Artillery, at his battery position*

son kept the regimental Cannon Company well supplied with fire missions; by the end of the day, Cannon Company had fired seventy missions or nineteen tons of out-going mail.

Unmindful of the artillery, mortar and sniper fire that swept the streets of Tettingen, Lieutenant Colonel Miner personally pointed out positions for the tank destroyers in the northern edge of town, but sniper fire, the narrow streets and the low silhouettes of the targets hindered the efficiency of the TDs. They engaged their targets, but poor firing conditions prevented maximum achievement.

At 1430 hours, the 110th launched its final attack of the day when the I, II and *Ersatz* Battalions charged Butzdorf, supported by the 2d Tank Company. Widely deployed, some fifteen vehicles swarming with infantry and preceded by Grenadiers on foot, swept over the hill and down the road to Butzdorf. When the enemy was about two hundred yards from the town, the defenders laid their final protective line fires. The advancing infantry wavered, paused and then continued forward leaving many of their numbers dead, wounded or dying in the snow behind them. In front of the attackers the ground belched

black smoke and jagged splinters of steel. Through this holocaust the Grenadiers continued to advance.

As the vehicles approached town, they paused and the infantry riding them, jumping off, took cover behind their mounts. Time and again the Grenadiers attempted to storm Butzdorf only to be driven back by murderous small-arms fire. After each repulse, the attackers would re-form behind their vehicles. Tanks roamed up and down the streets of the little town at will, firing through walls, windows and doors in attempts to pulverize the buildings held by the defenders. Still the resistance continued. All this was visible from Tettingen where the remainder of the battalion was powerless to assist Company A.

Private First Class Richard J. Kamins picks up the story again:

We were lucky. Zimny and Craig had blasted holes in the walls of every building in our block. We could withdraw without going into the open. One Tiger fired two rounds at us. The living room became unfit to live in, but no one was hurt. We ran across the street to the platoon CP. Joe DeLibero was the last man in. A piece of shrapnel tore his thigh. Two men dragged him inside.

Two machine-gun squads set up in the barn. "The Reverend" Pillow was giving the boys hell. Never have I seen more inspiring leadership. He talked like a movie hero, only he meant it. Pillow's loader, Howard Curler, was pretty comical. His glasses were broken and he was using binoculars in their stead. He'd squint in myopic glory through the field glasses at tanks that were no more than 150 yards away. To everybody but Curler their 88s looked like telephone poles.

Over in the 1st Platoon, Tom Wilson was pretty comical, too. His squad leader pointed to a tank about fifteen yards away with its gun leveled at their building and asked, "What do you think of that?" Laconically Wilson replied, "Dirty bore."

Then came an order for us to withdraw as best we could. Speaking as though he were talking about the weather, Joe DeLibero asked Smith, our acting platoon sergeant, if he was to be left behind. Smitty and Peck, the platoon runner, were the last men to leave the building. They had Joe with them. We all took off like birds.

At the company CP a machine gun was set up in each door. We counted noses. In the 1st Squad only one man was uninjured. Klein was gone, Walters gone, Derickson gone, Burdzy gone. Kovac was hit in the thigh, but continued to laugh and hobble around. Fite got a nasty piece of shrapnel through his hand. Joe DeLibero lay looking up at the ceiling. Some guys stepped on him; he didn't say anything.

While this attack was in progress, Private First Class Virgil E. Hamilton of Company D was bringing transportation corporal Bernie H. Heck and Corporal Earl N. Vulgamore, Company D's mail clerk, forward in his jeep. The three men had volunteered to get supplies

and ammunition into Butzdorf. Midway between the two towns, they spotted four enemy tanks and Hamilton whipped the jeep behind a farmhouse before they were discovered by the armor. In the jeep was a bazooka and ammunition for it destined for Company A. Although none of the men had ever used the weapon they decided to put it into action. It was hastily assembled and some rockets unpacked. Hamilton shouldered the tube, while Vulgamore and Heck stood by as loaders. When the leading tank had approached to within forty yards, Hamilton opened fire. The panzer, hit squarely, burst into flames. Round number two, directed against the second tank, was a bit high, but it reached its mark just as the astonished tank commander raised his hatch to discover the cause of the plight of the first Panther. Striking the inner surface of the hatch the bazooka round ricocheted into the tank's interior, accounting for tank number two. With an expenditure of five rounds, the third German tank was disposed of while its astonished crew attempted to locate their attackers. The fourth and last tank started to retreat and was eliminated at a range of 150 yards. •

In Butzdorf, the fighting continued throughout the afternoon. Technical Sergeant William McQuade of Company D accounted for a tank with one of the remaining pole charges, and when three armored vehicles converged on the section of heavy machine guns in the west of town, Instrument Corporal Earle F. Mousaw, though wounded, kept the tanks at bay with a bazooka, that the guns might remain in action.

At 1700 hours, when Lieutenant Stafford took stock of the situation, it looked far from good. He held some eight or nine buildings in the southern section of town while an unknown number of the enemy occupied the northern tip of Butzdorf. The enemy had set up a mortar in their part of town and German tanks were roaming the streets. In fact, one of the Panthers was parked just outside the window of the command post. Company A was out of bazooka ammunition and the supply of pole and satchel charges was exhausted. Of Lieutenant Baker's platoon there was only one HMG remaining. Sole method of communication was Lieutenant Morrison's artillery radio and this set, while it seemed to be sending, would not receive. Perhaps messages were getting through and perhaps not. In addition, there were thirty wounded in the command post, along with several prisoners.

Back in Tettingen, it was assumed that at least a portion of Company A was still holding out. The town was strangely silent, but enemy tanks were still patrolling the streets and there was occasional firing.

About this time, word was received that the 2d Battalion, 376th,

would effect a relief that night and Lieutenant Colonel Martin appeared on the scene with Company F right behind him. As final plans were made for the relief, Lieutenant Chalkley, assisted by men from Company F, was instructed to clear the town of snipers. About 1700 hours, two squads, one under Sergeant Soca and the other led by Technical Sergeant Harold B. Price, assaulted the building previously used as a platoon command post while two squads of Company F attacked the building beside it. Sergeant Drury and several other men who had been wounded and captured while defending these buildings were freed and eighteen prisoners were taken.

Once the town was cleared of snipers, the tank destroyers, urged on by their company commander, scored several hits on enemy vehicles. A self-propelled gun parked beside Butzdorf was set afire and exploding ammunition made a noisy and dangerous display of fireworks. Hits also were scored on three Panthers as they attempted to cross the antitank ditch east of town. Two tanks northeast of Butzdorf were set on fire and at least one of the supporting tanks on the ridge was damaged. As darkness fell, the area was lit by the glare of burning armor. The constant artillery and mortar fire plus the noise of exploding ammunition covered the sound of German recovery vehicles that succeeded in towing off three of the damaged tanks before they could be burned.

Then, on the orders of the CG, Division directed that Butzdorf be abandoned since it could not readily be resupplied or relieved and since it had served its purpose of bringing about great attrition on the enemy's infantry. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Strafford independently arrived at a similar conclusion. Lacking the strength or the ammunition to counterattack and since the company's position was indefensible, Lieutenant Strafford decided to withdraw before he was rushed in the dark and overwhelmed.

On his one-way radio Lieutenant Morrison called for a covering artillery barrage. The message got through and the 919th and 284th Field Artillery Battalions obliged. Men pulled doors off their hinges and loaded the litter cases on these while the walking wounded moved up the hill to Tettingen. It had started to sleet and the night was so black visibility was reduced to a matter of inches. Platoon leaders counted their men by touch. Lieutenant Hodges, checking his platoon, suddenly felt an odd shaped pack and an overcoat of peculiar texture. Pulling the man out of line, he discovered that a fully armed German infantryman had innocently wandered among his men. The intruder



was quickly disarmed, informed of his PW status and escorted to the rear with the platoon as it pulled out.

The 1st Battalion, less Company B, was relieved and back in Wochern by 2200 hours on the 18th; Captain Henry C. Bowden, Jr.'s men spent the night in the woods in the sleet and mud. During the hours of darkness, a forty-man German patrol overran one of the platoon's positions and took up residence in some of the company's foxholes. At dawn the enemy was driven out by rifle fire, leaving behind some fifteen dead. Company B was relieved the night of the 19th and rejoined the battalion en route to the reserve position at Veckring.

### MONKEY WRENCH WOODS

On the 18th of January, the 302d Infantry was relieved from Corps reserve and became Division reserve. The 1st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Silas W. Hosea, moved to Perl the same day following receipt of a warning order of the impending relief of the 376th Infantry by Colonel Johnson's regiment. Early on the afternoon of the 19th, Company B, under Captain Altus L. Woods, Jr. moved to assault the five pillboxes south of Nennig which commanded the Besch-Nennig road. Initially the attack progressed favorably. One box was taken and twelve prisoners had been captured when the tank destroyer that was providing covering fire exhausted its ammunition supply. The attack had to be abandoned then, as the supply of demolitions also proved insufficient and an attempt at resupply was futile.

On the 20th another attack was launched at this group of pillboxes for Division was very much concerned over the matter. A counter-attack in strength against Nennig seemed likely and these enemy fortifications effectively prevented traffic over the only existing supply road. In this second attempt, the assault detachment was composed of Companies A and B, an improvised section of .50-caliber machine guns, two platoons from Company B of the 319th Engineers and a section of TDs from the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion. To assure an adequate supply of ammunition, two platoons of Company A were employed as carrying parties. The remaining rifle platoon of Company A protected the right flank of the group.

At 0912 hours the attack jumped off with two of the pillboxes being assaulted while the others were buttoned up by fire from the supporting weapons. Enemy mortar and artillery fire on the attackers was intense. As the Germans were driven out of these first boxes by the engineers' flame throwers, they were questioned on the spot by Private First Class Morris H. Wasserman of the Battalion Intelligence Section.

These interrogations revealed the location of several enemy artillery emplacements south of Thorn. Counterbattery fire was requested at once.

As soon as the first two boxes were taken, the carrying parties began to load them with demolitions. Lieutenant Roger L. Guernsey's machine-gun platoon was brought forward to give overhead support as the attack continued. Enemy artillery fire continued heavy and inflicted most of the casualties suffered. At 1405 hours the last of the pillboxes was taken; the PW total for the operation came to 108.

With the reduction of the last of these boxes, the carrying parties went to work in earnest. Despite heavy artillery fire the captured fortifications were loaded with explosives and turned over to the engineers for demolition. As each in turn was blown, a deafening explosion rent the air and a huge cloud of black smoke arose as the roof of a pillbox puffed up and walls eight feet thick crumbled into rubble.

South of these pillboxes, the woods as shown on a map resembles the head of a huge monkey wrench with open jaws. This fact, coupled with the absence of any known name, soon brought the nickname, Monkey Wrench Woods, into common use. While the engineers were busy blowing the pillboxes, Company A, commanded by Captain Robert L. Woodburn, cleared the upper jaw of the Monkey Wrench while Company B tackled the lower. Having completed these tasks they pulled back to Besch in compliance with instructions of battalion.

On the morning of January 21, 1945, Company B returned to the woods to take up positions. As it approached the northwest edge of the forest, the troops were met by a hail of rifle and machine-gun fire. During the night, the enemy had infiltrated the position and set up automatic weapons among the massive ruins of the pillboxes. This fire was intense and sustained, causing heavy casualties. So badly was the company cut up, it became necessary to withdraw it to the vicinity of Besch. Company A then moved forward and seized positions in the southwest corner of the upper jaw. Contact was established with Company C to the east by patrol but that night both flanks of Company A were exposed to possible enemy thrusts.

The following morning, Company B moved forward to Company A's positions and the latter company jumped off behind an artillery concentration to clear the upper jaw. When this was done, Company A assumed a defensive position along the northern edge of the woods. Company B, in the southwest corner of the Monkey Wrench Woods, received heavy shelling all during the night of January 22-23. Morning disclosed that the German machine guns had withdrawn from the pillbox ruins. That night Company A moved forward to the antitank ditch.

## Chapter 16: ORSHOLZ

THE INTRODUCTION of the 11th Panzer Division had produced a fierce battle along the western flank of the Siegfried Switch Line. However, the rest of the German defense position, from Borg east to the Saar, remained relatively quiet. Against this quiet sector Division planned to launch the next limited objective attack, and the 301st Infantry prepared to seize Orsholz.

General Malony's over-all plan for the reduction of the Switch position called for a double envelopment. Capture of the Nennig-Tettingen area had penetrated the right flank of the German line, anchored on the Moselle. The capture of Orsholz would unhinge the enemy's left, anchored on the Saar. Once this second breach was made, further attacks could be launched until the claws of the pincer met on Munzingen ridge. This action would completely surround the center of the German defense line, which could be reduced at leisure. Also, the Triangle itself would then be completely exposed and Trier would be within reach.

Orsholz was situated on a hill some four hundred feet high and was surrounded by massive pillboxes set in an arc roughly a quarter of a mile in front of the town. A hairpin turn in the Saar, a thousand yards to the east, brought the river practically to the door of the town. Terrain in this vicinity was wild, broken and heavily wooded. At the river, it fell off sharply in steep, rocky cliffs. This double line of river front and the proximity of a town on dominant and easily defensible terrain made the location an ideal one for the eastern terminus of the Switch Line.

South and east of Orsholz the ground was open and sloped gradually from the north; these naked slopes gave perfect fields of fire to the numerous pillboxes the enemy had erected. The only cover to the front of the German positions in which an attacker might conceal direct-support weapons was too far distant for accurate fire to be delivered against the German fortifications. The terrain offered only one likely avenue of approach. Between Oberleuken and Orsholz was the Forêt de Saarburg, a heavily wooded area which extended from the American to the German lines and then turned eastward to the outskirts of Orsholz. These woods made an ideal approach to the town. However, they favored the defense as well as the attack and the Germans had not neglected to improve the position.

Prior to the decision to reduce Orsholz, American patrols had not penetrated deeply into these woods. But, with this decision, the 1st Battalion and the I&R Platoon of the 301st sent reconnaissance parties to comb the Forêt de Saarburg, searching for enemy positions and the

most favorable avenues of approach. A few small fire fights were stirred up, but for the most part the patrols sighted no enemy. Several times reconnaissance parties advanced to the antitank ditch in front of the Orsholz-Oberleuken road without being detected. To lull the suspicions of the enemy, no patrols were sent beyond this ditch until two days prior to the attack. Then, a small carefully selected group was dispatched with instructions to proceed through the woods, to the rear of Orsholz, to determine the approximate strength of the enemy garrison. This patrol slipped into the deep forest and was never again seen.

When the 1st Battalion 301st was chosen as the attacking battalion for the 94th's third limited-objective operation, the troops commandeered sheets, curtains and tablecloths and fashioned them into crude snow-suits. They constructed pole and satchel charges, and the engineers made available mines and flame throwers.

On January 19, 1945, elements of the 3d Cavalry Group relieved the 3d Battalion 301st which shifted to the left, in turn relieving the 1st Battalion. At the same time, the 2d Battalion made ready to protect the left flank of the regiment. The 301st Field Artillery was to provide the main fire support for the operation and Company A of the 319th Engineers checked the trails through the woods for mines.

The night of the 19th, the weather was bitter cold and snow, already a foot deep on the ground, was descending so thickly it was hard to distinguish familiar landmarks. At 2400 hours, the 1st Battalion left Ober-Tünsdorf and began its march through the woods. Company B, commanded by Captain Herman C. Straub, moved out first with Technical Sergeant Ernest W. Halle of the I&R Platoon acting as guide. Captain Charles B. Colgan and Company A followed closely while Captain Cleo B. Smith's Company C, which had been designated as the battalion reserve, brought up the rear of the column. Lieutenant Colonel George F. Miller and his battalion command group followed the rear of Company A. The 1st Platoon of Company D, commanded by Lieutenant Robert W. Jonscher, was attached to Captain Straub's company while the 2d Platoon came under Company A's control. Captain Gilbert S. Woodrill and the mortar platoon of the battalion followed the battalion command group.

The 4,000-yard march to the line of departure proved an exhausting grind. Though the cold was intense, the men were so loaded with equipment and extra ammunition they were soon perspiring. Frequent rest halts were made en route and battalion communications personnel

laid wire as the column advanced. At each halt, Lieutenant Colonel Miller called the regimental command post to report personally to Colonel Hagerty.

By 0330 hours, Sergeant Halle and the head of the column reached the forward assembly area, a few hundred yards from the line of departure. H-hour had been set for 0600 hours. Patrols and listening posts were sent out to protect the forward assembly area and Captains Straub and Colgan made their way through the snow for a last-minute reconnaissance.

The line of departure was a small stream named Merl Branch which lay just beyond a series of dragon's teeth. Still farther beyond was a small group of buildings thought to be camouflaged pillboxes. Company A had formed a special assault squad which was to precede the company and eliminate any resistance that might develop from this quarter. At the point where the Orsholz-Oberleuken road crossed Merl Branch, the dragon's teeth gave way to an antitank ditch which ran through the woods to the east, on the south side of the road. However, in the blinding snowstorm little of this terrain was visible to the company commanders. In fact, they could barely see the dragon's teeth to their front.

At 0500 hours the assault companies left the assembly area and moved into position in rear of the line of departure. The heavy snowfall and the density of the woods caused them to lose contact with each other and because of this Lieutenant Colonel Miller delayed the attack. Before contact was reestablished, it was 0725 hours. The attack then began; no artillery preparation was employed.

As the right of Company A slipped out of the woods and into the band of dragon's teeth, the stillness was broken by a series of loud explosions. Screaming in agony men fell among the concrete obstacles. Hidden beneath the thick carpet of snow was a field of *Schü* mines, S mines, and a tangle of barbed wire. Attempts to veer to the right and left only gave testimony to the extent and density of the minefield, though some few men were lucky enough to pass through the dragon's teeth unscathed.

On the left, Company B along with Captain Colgan's two left platoons, Lieutenant Jonscher's machine-gun platoon, a detachment from the regimental Mine Platoon, and a Cannon Company forward observer group, having encountered no mines, moved forward rapidly. Without opposition, they gained the Oberleuken-Orsholz road. Turning right, this group headed for the battalion objective, straight down the highway leading into Orsholz from the west. As these elements

of the 1st Battalion swept forward, the advance guard overran some enemy machine-gun positions, killing several Germans and taking a few prisoners. Confident that the rest of the battalion would break through, Captain Straub continued his advance. Thus the company and its accompanying elements swept silently to the edge of the woods west of Orsholz without alerting the enemy garrison. There they awaited the arrival of the rest of the battalion that a coordinated attack might be launched against the town.

Still at the line of departure, the remainder of the battalion gave way to the left to use Company B's route through the dragon's teeth. When the leading elements of this group had passed through the tank obstacle and were about half way across the open ground in the bottom of the draw beyond, German machine guns opened fire from the north. Instantly the attacking force was caught in a withering fire pattern. The 1st Platoon of Company A, bringing up the rear of the assault and about to move into the open, set up a base of fire from the edge of the woods which succeeded in sufficiently reducing the volume of enemy fire to allow the other platoons to withdraw. All hope of surprise was now gone. The enemy could not be seen but the shout of orders in German was clearly audible and the sound of movement could be heard in hidden communication trenches somewhere to the front.

The enemy had accomplished a superior job of camouflage in this area. He had built pillboxes, bunkers and communication trenches in the forest and then had felled trees to form a massive network of criss-crossing logs above and around them. Through this tangle, fields of fire had been cut carefully. It was almost impossible to detect a German position unless one was in its immediate vicinity when fire was delivered.

The 301st Field Artillery was called upon to blast a hole for the infantry and a heavy barrage was laid. Following this, Company A again attempted to advance. The troops worked their way to the middle of the draw and there they were again stopped by murderous fire from skillfully concealed enemy machine-gun positions. All the fire power the battalion could bring to bear was not sufficient to silence these weapons. Captain Colgan's men could neither advance nor withdraw as the slightest movement brought a hail of enemy lead that swept the area, chewing up the snow. German artillery also began to fall among the troops, adding greatly to the carnage.

With this development, the battalion commander came forward to pull together the remnants of his command and attempt to discover



some means of breaking through to Company B. Just then, the German artillery increased its range slightly to saturate the edge of the woods used as the line of departure with fire. Lieutenant Colonel Miller was caught in a concentration and killed almost immediately. A short time later, within ten yards of where the battalion commander fell, Lieutenant Adrian B. DePutron was killed by bursts of enemy machine-gun fire.

Major Arthur W. Hodges, the battalion executive officer, immediately assumed command of the disorganized battalion. He withdrew what remained of the outfit deeper into the woods and began preparations for a new attack. In conjunction with these preparations, Company I was attached to the 1st Battalion at 1000 hours and moved into the Forêt de Saarburg. A new attack was launched at 1500 hours, preceded by a heavy artillery concentration. The assault units made progress until again they encountered antipersonnel mines. As the artillery support lifted, the Germans laid their final protective line fires. Hidden machine guns raked the rifle platoons and casualties began to mount. The troops were finally withdrawn.

During the afternoon, the regimental commander appointed his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Donald C. Hardin, who had formerly commanded the 1st Battalion, as temporary battalion commander. A second time, deeper within the wood, the command was reorganized and it was decided to launch the next attempt several hundred yards farther to the left, in an effort to avoid the German minefields. At 1755 hours, just before darkness fell, the final attack jumped off. The story repeated itself: mines, booby traps, final-protective-line fire and accurate enemy artillery. The battalion could not break through to Company B.

On the morning of the 20th with the beginning of the first attack against Orsholz, the 2d Battalion, 301st, on the left of the regiment, had swung its right flank north, through the woods, in the direction of the attack. This action prevented the enemy from sending any forces from Oberleuken to counterattack the 1st Battalion. Company A of the 748th Tank Battalion had also moved forward into the woods and was prepared to assist in the assault on Orsholz, as soon as the antitank ditch could be cleared and bridged. Unfortunately this was never accomplished.

As the 20th progressed and the rest of the battalion failed to come abreast, Captain Straub and his men began to receive a good deal of attention from the enemy. Company B and those elements of Com-



*On the way!*

panies A and D that came through the German defenses with Captain Straub were forced to move south of the Orsholz–Oberleuken road to secure a position suitable for an all-around defense. Forward observers from the 301st Field Artillery and the regimental Cannon Company, with Company B, time and again ringed this group with protective fire.

Throughout the night of the 20-21st, the German artillery relentlessly pounded the troops in the woods. Enemy shells crashed into the treetops and burst in deadly showers of shell fragments. By the time a count could be taken of the strength of a unit, additional casualties rendered the total incorrect. The group was gradually being whittled away.

After darkness, those men caught in the draw during the day who had not frozen to death or been riddled by the almost constant machine-gun and artillery fire, crawled back to the woods. Litter squads attempted to venture into the clearing time and again to remove the wounded, but repeatedly they were driven back by the volume of fire.

Patrols sent out during the night returned without a solution to the problem of a passage through the enemy defenses. Finally, Lieutenant Colonel Hardin called the regimental commander and informed him it would take at least a regiment to accomplish the assigned mission. Permission was obtained to abandon the attack against Orsholz.

On the 21st, after a conference with Lieutenant Colonel Samuel L. Morrow of the 301st Field Artillery, it was decided to smoke the area between Orsholz and the Forêt de Saarburg in an attempt to cover the withdrawal of Company B. Captain Straub's radio was still in contact with the battalion's forward observation posts and Colonel Hagerty came forward personally to brief Company B on this plan.

When radio contact was established, Captain Straub informed the regimental commander the plan could not be executed. Company B had almost exhausted its ammunition, the men were exhausted and freezing to death. Moreover, the area through which they would have to withdraw was heavily mined and their exact location was known to the enemy. For the sake of his remaining men, Captain Straub decided to surrender.

During the early afternoon, the remnants of the 1st Battalion withdrew from the woods. Under the cover of smoke, as many as possible of the wounded and dead were evacuated. The 2d Battalion covered the withdrawal and the original lines were resumed. To reorganize and recuperate, the shattered 1st Battalion was placed in reserve. Major Hodges was made battalion commander and Major William E. McBride was assigned to the battalion as executive officer. Upon the recommendation of the Division Commander, Lieutenant Joseph E. Cancilla was appointed company commander of Company B and charged with the responsibility of constructing and training a new company.

Higher headquarters decided to make no further attempt at taking Orsholz for the present. Later, when the Division was freed of its one battalion restriction, the score would be settled.

## *Chapter 17: THE 302D MOVES UP*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL OTTO B. CLOUDT, Jr., commanding the 3d Battalion, 302d, received orders on January 19, 1945 to relieve the 3d Battalion, 376th, in the Nennig–Wies–Berg area. The battalion commander, accompanied by Captain James E. Cook, Battalion S-3; Lieutenant Harold C. Nelson, Battalion S-2; the company commanders of the battalion and all the platoon leaders, proceeded to Nennig on reconnaissance. The party moved by jeep to a point midway between Besch and Nennig before dismounting. From there, they walked and crawled the remaining distance into town. As they approached the railroad, several mortar rounds and some machine-gun fire was directed at them. No casualties resulted as they were well dispersed.

At the command post of the 3d Battalion, 376th, the party was oriented on the situation and Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt gave the various company commanders their assignments. Company I, commanded by Captain Allan R. Williams, was to move into Wies and Berg. Company K, under Lieutenant Carl W. Seeby, would take over the defense of Nennig. The 1st Platoon of Company L, under command of Lieutenant John R. Travers, was attached to Company K and was to relieve Lieutenant Fox in the orchard. Captain John N. Smith of Company L was directed to deploy the remainder of his unit between the orchard and Tettingen, a distance of more than fifteen hundred yards. As usual, Captain Francis M. Hurst's heavy weapons company was divided. The mortar platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Douglas I. Smith, was to provide support from the commanding ground on the Luxembourg side of the river while one machine-gun platoon supported Company I and the other Company K.

Late in the afternoon, the battalion executive officer, Major Earl L. Meyers, moved the battalion from Sierck to the woods north of Perl. At dark, Major Meyers directed Lieutenant Robert A. Edwards, Company I's executive officer, to lead Companies I, K and the 1st Platoon of Company L into Besch. There they were met by a guide from Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion, who conducted them into the Nennig area. At the railroad tracks west of town, the commanders met their units and led them into position. It was a cold, clear night and the relief was completed without incident or interruption.

Company I was in position prior to midnight. Captain Williams' unit, less the 2d Platoon, moved into Wies while Lieutenant William J. Doherty and his men took over Berg. The company commander kept one section of heavy machine guns with him and sent the other

two guns with the 2d Platoon. In Berg, Lieutenant Doherty put two of his squads and the section of HMGs in Schloss Berg and the remaining riflemen in a house overlooking the draw east of town. After the completion of the relief, Lieutenant Peter Somfeld led a carrying party back to Nennig while the remainder of the company improved its defensive positions. To the north of Wies the Germans still held Schloss Bubingen.

In Nennig, Lieutenant Seeby used the 1st and part of the 2d Platoons to defend the town itself while the 3d Platoon, under Technical Sergeant Frank A. O'Hara, took positions in the communication trenches at the edge of the woods, on the ridge overlooking Nennig. Also on the ridge was the heavy machine-gun platoon attached to the company and a forward observer from the 356th Field Artillery.

The 1st Platoon of Company L moved into position with elements of Company K and the 2d Squad of Lieutenant Travers' platoon was employed to reinforce the right of Sergeant O'Hara's position. It took over the communication trenches in the woods east of the platoon of Company K. The remainder of Lieutenant Travers' platoon continued eastward, through the woods to the orchard. There they slipped into the open emplacements and foxholes as Lieutenant Fox and his men moved off into the darkness, carrying their dead with them.

At the same time the rest of Company L moved west from Tettingen to assume positions along its vastly extended front. The 3d Platoon, commanded by Technical Sergeant Chester E. Markowski, was employed north of the Nennig-Tettingen road, off to the right of Lieutenant Travers' men; Technical Sergeant John Karl's 2d Platoon held the right of the company line between Tettingen and the 3d Platoon, in a series of communication trenches south of the road; the Weapons Platoon was divided between the 2d and 3d Platoons.

Prior to the completion of the relief at midnight on the 19th, Captain Bowden of Company B, 376th, asked Captain Smith how long he expected to remain on the ridge. Captain Smith replied, "About seven days." The CO of Company B then commented, "Somebody may be up here seven days from now, but it won't be you."

In the orchard Lieutenant Travers' men made contact with the enemy before dawn. At about 0400 hours, a three-man patrol approached from the direction of Nennig. Because of the fog and the darkness, visibility among the trees was greatly reduced and the leading German was within five feet of the nearest foxhole before he was identified and shot. The two remaining members of the hostile patrol broke into a run, but were brought down by rifle fire. Two hours later a forty-

man German patrol approached the position in a column of twos. When within fifty yards of the 1st Platoon, they stopped for a break. The men in the orchard opened fire, killing or wounding half the group on the initial volley; the survivors scattered.

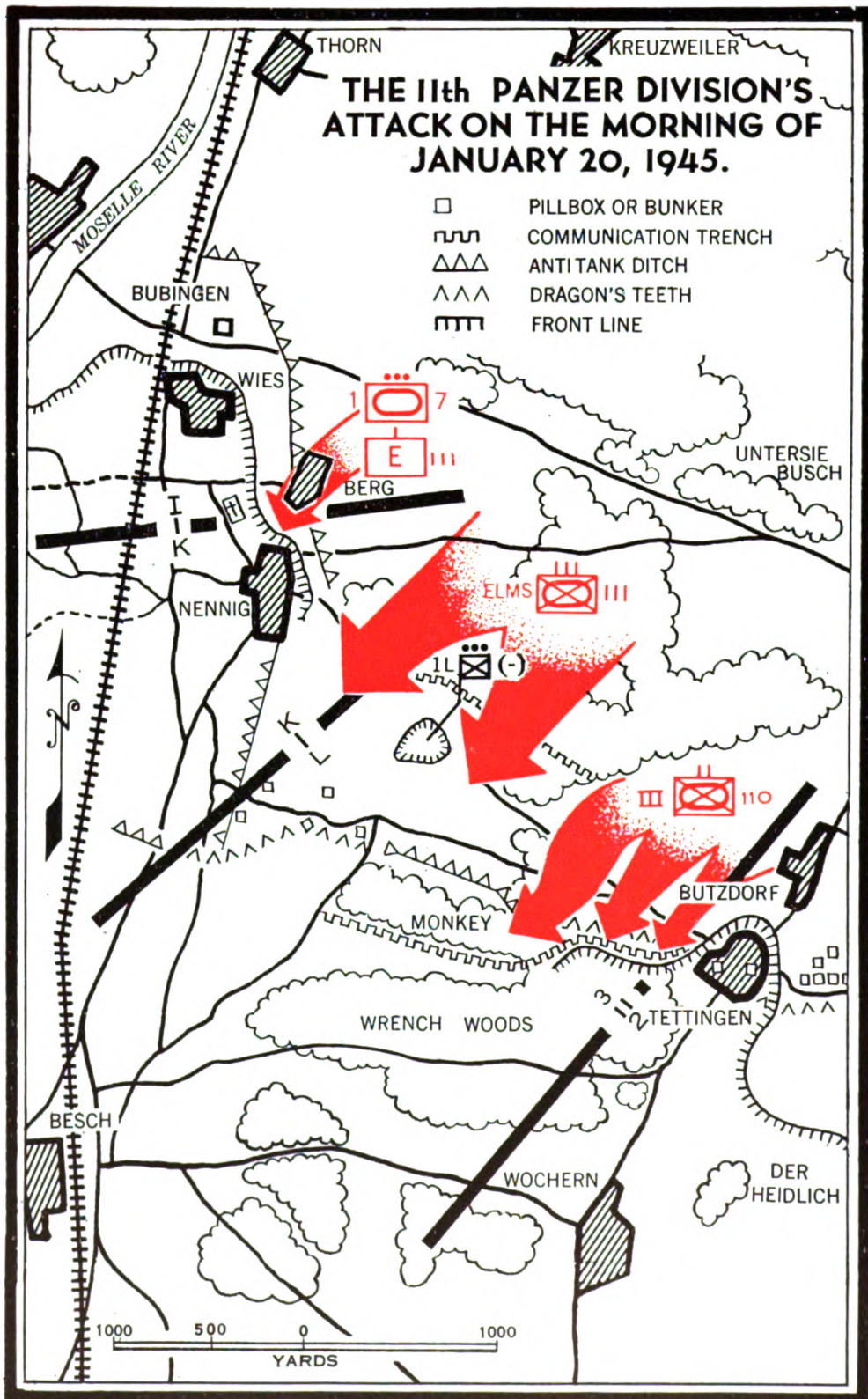
Sergeant O'Hara's platoon and the squad of Company L on its right were fiercely attacked soon after assuming their positions. Under this pressure they withdrew to Nennig where Lieutenant Seeby ordered them back to the ridge, on the right of Lieutenant Henry J. Fink's 2d Platoon which occupied the east of town. When a patrol went out to determine whether or not the Germans had occupied the 1st Platoon's positions it was driven back by enemy fire. Throughout the remainder of the night small groups of Germans came to the ridge positions where they were cut down by rifle and automatic fire.

Meanwhile, there was a good deal of enemy activity around Lieutenant Travers' position in the orchard and enemy troop movements in the woods to the north increased. During the course of the morning it became apparent that the platoon was gradually being surrounded.

To the right of the men in the orchard, the rest of Company L was also encountering trouble. As a security measure, Captain Smith had posted four men on either side of the wooden bunker he was using for a command post. Just at dawn, two shots rang out and First Sergeant John J. Stracelsky, who was standing in the doorway, fell mortally wounded. Fearing the command group would be trapped in the bunker, Captain Smith ordered it evacuated before the light improved or the sniper was reinforced. One by one, the men dashed from the shelter for the trench where the 60mm mortars were emplaced.

After daylight, a heavy artillery concentration ushered in an enemy attack which thrust between Sergeant Markowski's platoon on the left and Sergeant Karl's men on the right. This attack which hit the left of the 2d Platoon, drove Sergeant Karl's men back to the firing trench in the rear of their position. The 3d Platoon held fast, but the withdrawal of the 2d on its right meant that both flanks were exposed and they too were in danger of being surrounded. Lieutenant William Burke, forward observer from the 356th Field Artillery, had joined Company L during the night and was in position with the 3d Platoon when it was attacked. For fire support Lieutenant Burke contacted fire direction center via an SCR-300 radio borrowed from Captain Smith. This radio was in contact with the 2d Battalion CP in Wochern where his fire missions were relayed to Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Whitely's 356th Field Artillery. Captain Smith himself had to rely on runners





for communication with Wochern. From there contact with 3d Battalion Headquarters in Besch was made by telephone.

In an effort to cover Sergeant Markowski's exposed right flank, Captain Smith ordered the 2d Platoon to attack immediately to regain their old positions. This was attempted but heavy rifle, machine-gun and *Schmeisser* fire was encountered and the understrength platoon was forced back to the cover of the communication trench. Later five men who had been on the flank of the 3d Platoon worked their way back and joined forces with the 2d. They reported killing about twenty-five Germans before they ran out of ammunition but knew nothing of the fate of the rest of their unit.

Captain Smith next sent a messenger to Wochern to report the situation, request reinforcements and to bring forward another radio. This messenger returned shortly, accompanied by a patrol from Company F, led by Lieutenant Joe D. Alvarado, whose mission was to contact the 1st Battalion troops working on the pillboxes south of the Nennig-Tettingen road. Later Lieutenant Anthony Cerboskas of Company L was sent into Wochern to emphasize the gravity of the situation. Captain Smith had under his command only forty men. He was receiving heavy rocket and artillery fire all along his front and feared he would be overwhelmed momentarily.

As the afternoon wore on, the sound of firing to the flanks of Lieutenant Travers' position in the orchard became more and more remote. It was obvious that the fighting had by-passed the orchard and that the enemy was in their rear. There was no radio with the platoon, so if battalion was to be informed that the position had not been overwhelmed, someone would have to work through the enemy forces and report to Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt. Lieutenant Travers, accompanied by two volunteers, left on this dangerous mission.

Since his destination was Besch and his desire was to get there as quickly as possible, the platoon leader headed his party south. By stealthy maneuvering the group managed to avoid the enemy mine-fields and evade interception. Upon reaching the Nennig-Tettingen road the patrol was greatly surprised to encounter the Regimental Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Gaddis, at the northern edge of Monkey Wrench Woods. When informed of the situation, Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis had Lieutenant Travers and his men accompany him to the battalion CP in Besch and then to the regimental command post in Perl. At both places Lieutenant Travers repeated his story. But, with the whole of the regimental front under attack and

a gap in the center of the line, there were no reserves available to rescue the isolated group.

On the afternoon of January 19, 1945, while Colonel Cloudt and his party were on reconnaissance in the Nennig area, the 2d Battalion, 302d Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Frank P. Norman, moved into Wochern and began the relief of the 1st Battalion, 376th. Company E, under Captain James W. Butler set up in Borg; Company G, commanded by Captain James W. Griffin, took over Tettingen; and Company F, commanded by Captain Herman Kops, Jr. was designated battalion reserve. The latter company was divided between Wochern and Der Heidlich. Captain Orville M. Owings of Company H sent one machine-gun platoon to Wochern and the other to Borg, while the 81mm mortars assumed positions in the cemetery west of Wochern. The following day at approximately 2000 hours, Company G in Tettingen, was attacked from three sides by an enemy force estimated as a reinforced company. Savage fighting continued for three hours. Unable to beat their way into town, the Germans finally withdrew.

Also on the 20th, Company C of the 302d Infantry moved into Wochern as regimental reserve while the rest of the 1st Battalion was busy clearing the western portions of Monkey Wrench Woods. While the troops began preparing positions around the town, Captain Norbert C. Marek and his platoon leaders moved forward on reconnaissance and, at 1600 hours, joined Captain Smith at his command post requesting that he orient them on his situation. While the CO of Company L was explaining matters, a radio message was received from Lieutenant Colonel Norman. It was addressed to Captain Marek, who had just been attached to the 2d Battalion, and read: "You are committed with Captain Smith." (Those elements of Company L still under Captain Smith's control were also attached to Lieutenant Colonel Norman's battalion whose left boundary had been pushed eastward following the enemy's penetration of the regimental front.) The CO of Company C promptly dispatched a runner to lead his troops forward, and then went into conference with Captain Smith. To restore the original line of Company L and regain contact with the 3d Platoon, the company commanders agreed to counterattack at once.

Company C moved forward into the woods behind Tettingen and there the platoon leaders joined their men. The troops dropped their packs and moved to the firing trench occupied by the 2d Platoon of Company L. As they came into position, they were greeted by a fierce artillery concentration. When this fire lifted, the 2d and 3d Platoons

of Captain Marek's company took positions on the flanks of Sergeant Karl's platoon. Captain Smith then appointed Sergeant Karl First Sergeant and Staff Sergeant Anthony S. Ewasko took over the platoon.

Lieutenant John A. Wilson, the 356th Field Artillery forward observer with Company C, arranged a five-minute preparation on the woods to the immediate front. As this friendly artillery fire lifted, the troops moved forward to the antitank ditch and slid down its sides. The thin film of ice in the bottom of the ditch broke beneath the weight of the men, immersing them almost hip-deep in the frigid water. In the ditch, Lieutenant Donald L. Renck's platoon was momentarily delayed. To the right, Sergeant Ewasko's platoon, and beyond it the right flank platoon under Lieutenant Carl D. Richards, moved forward. A burst of machine-gun fire from the wooden bunker that had been used by Company L as a command post, killed Lieutenant Renck and injured several others as they emerged from the ditch. The rest of the platoon overwhelmed the defenders of this bunker, taking twelve prisoners and two machine guns. Simultaneously, rocket and artillery fire plus automatic-weapons fire from pillboxes north of the Nennig-Tettingen road proved so intense, only the right flank elements of the attacking force were able to regain the old positions.

Captains Smith and Marek, moving forward in rear of the assault platoons, encountered several Germans of whom they killed two and captured eight. Observing that the Americans were taking prisoners, several more enemy infantrymen stood up with their hands raised in surrender. Since the area was apparently far from cleared, Captain Smith dispatched a runner to contact the left platoon. In a short time, the man returned saying he could find neither Lieutenant Renck nor his men. The CO of Company L then took up a search himself locating the platoon in the vicinity of the antitank ditch where they had been stopped by the volume of enemy fire and thrown into confusion. The platoon leader was dead and Technical Sergeant George E. Fossal, the Platoon Sergeant, was missing. So quickly had events transpired, Staff Sergeant Francis J. Kelly, the platoon guide, did not realize that he was in command. While the platoon reorganized Captain Marek with a small force hunted down and eliminated the German machine-gun crew causing most of the trouble.

The entire counterattacking force then dug positions facing the Nennig-Tettingen road and a pair of pillboxes which had halted the advance, with the left of the line curving off to the southwest to reduce the danger of being outflanked. In the drive forward nothing had been seen of Sergeant Markowski or his platoon.

Throughout the night this new position was subject to almost constant artillery and rocket fire. Tree bursts multiplied the hazard and casualties were numerous. Several times during the hours of darkness, Lieutenant Richards inspected the position and recommended that the line be pulled back to the firing trench, as the position was only thinly held and the left flank was badly exposed. This suggestion was finally accepted. Litters were improvised and the slow process of evacuating the more seriously wounded began. Its completion took most of the night. While it was in progress the line had to be held despite the fact that the enemy had emplaced machine guns on the flank of the group and the whole area was constantly being raked by fire.

Throughout this fighting on the 20th and 21st, Technician Third Grade John F. Risky, an aid man attached to Company L, repeatedly distinguished himself. Time and again he disregarded the intensity of the enemy's machine-gun and artillery fire while crawling to the assistance of wounded riflemen. On one occasion part of his coat was ripped to shreds by enemy fire. Twice when portions of the company were temporarily forced to withdraw, he remained behind to care for the wounded. His heroic actions were responsible for saving the lives of more than one member of Company L.

The intense cold experienced during the night in the woods, following the dip in the antitank ditch during the attack, greatly increased the number of non-battle casualties in both companies. By morning, fifteen men had to be evacuated because of a combination of trench foot and frozen feet. At 1000 hours, when Lieutenant Colonel Norman visited Company L, permission was requested to withdraw the company, which now numbered only eighteen men. Captain Smith explained to the battalion commander that he had not been evacuating men with uncomplicated cases of trench foot, but because of overlong exposure his men's hands were beginning to freeze. Lieutenant Colonel Norman ordered the remnants of Company L into Wochern.

During the afternoon a patrol from Company A worked its way east through the upper jaw of Monkey Wrench Woods and made contact with the left flank of Captain Marek's company. Due to the confused situation and the vastly extended front, it was impossible for the two units to extend their flanks and reestablish a continuous line of resistance that night.

On the 22d, eighteen B-24s were seen flying north. They bombed the towns of Buren and Kreuzweiler where the enemy had 120mm mortar and artillery positions. This air mission was officially reported as having been executed "with good effect." The following day, three





*Water-distributing point organized and operated by the 319th Engineer Battalion*

flights of P-47s bombed and strafed Sinz and Bannholz Woods. The latter area was known to harbor a concentration of enemy armor. This mission was also on target; several fires resulted.

The morning of the 23d at 1108 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Norman and his S-3, Captain Burgess G. Hodges, reported to the regimental command post. There Colonel Johnson issued orders for the reduction of the pillboxes that had stopped the combined attack of Companies L and C. Company F of the 376th Infantry had taken these fortifications several days before, but the enemy had succeeded in re-occupying them. As soon as these orders were issued, Lieutenant Colonel Norman called Major Harold V. Maixner, the battalion executive officer, and instructed him to relieve those elements of Company F holding Der Heidlich with the remnants of Company L. Two assault teams were then to be formed from the company. The CO of Company C was next contacted and informed that his company would be responsible for securing the left of Company F as it attacked. A squad of engineers also was earmarked for this mission and satchel charges, flame throwers and demolitions were brought forward. When all was in readiness the assault groups and the carrying parties left Wochern, accompanied by the battalion commander. They proceeded to a point in rear of Company C's position where they deployed for the attack. Upon the successful completion of the assault, Captain Marek's men were to take over the new line.

At 1645 hours the attack began, following a short artillery preparation. A diversionary attack was launched at Campholz Woods, but

this did not in the least throw the enemy off guard. As the attackers moved forward, they were met with a heavy barrage of rockets and artillery, in addition to intense automatic weapons fire. The 1st Platoon of Company C gained only about three hundred yards before it was pinned down by heavy and accurate machine-gun fire directed against its flank. Casualties were inflicted almost immediately and began to mount alarmingly. Technical Sergeant Nicholas Oresko, acting as platoon leader, completely disregarded the intensity of this fire and moved against the nearest machine gun, emplaced in a bunker. As he advanced, he was hit but continued forward without a halt. The sergeant lobbed a grenade, then charged the position, killing its occupants with his M1. Shortly thereafter, Sergeant Oresko was hit in the right hip and knocked to the ground. He regained his feet, refused aid, and continued to lead his platoon. When fierce and accurate rifle and machine-gun fire from a second bunker again stalled the advance, Sergeant Oresko repeated his daring single handed assault. By use of a grenade and his M1, he annihilated the second machine-gun crew. Only then did the sergeant consent to proceed to the aid station as a walking casualty.

During this same action, Private James F. Cousineau displayed a similar disregard for the intensity of the enemy's small-arms and automatic-weapons fire. He charged a German machine-gun position, knocked it out with grenades and then cut down eleven of the enemy with the fire of his M1. Later in the day, while attempting to evacuate wounded comrades from positions in advance of the firing line, Private Cousineau and another soldier were surrounded by an enemy patrol. Together they fiercely engaged the Germans and fought their way back to the company.

Throughout this assault German artillery and rocket fire continued at terrible intensity; many men were thrown into a state of temporary paralysis by the terrific blast effect of the Screaming Meemies. One of the flame throwers was lost in the waters of the antitank ditch and the .50-calibers could not be gotten across this obstacle. At 1730 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Norman called off the attack and sent Company F back into Wochern.



## Chapter 18: NENNIG COUNTERATTACK

THOSE ELEMENTS of the 3d Battalion, 302d, in the Nennig-Berg-Wies area, also received quite a bit of attention from the 11th Panzer Division in the days immediately following the relief of Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion. At approximately 1000 hours on January 20, 1945, five German tanks loaded with infantry tried to storm Nennig from the north. Intense small-arms fire and artillery broke the back of the attack and scattered the Grenadiers. A few of the attackers managed to gain a foothold in the northern edge of town, but were soon eliminated.

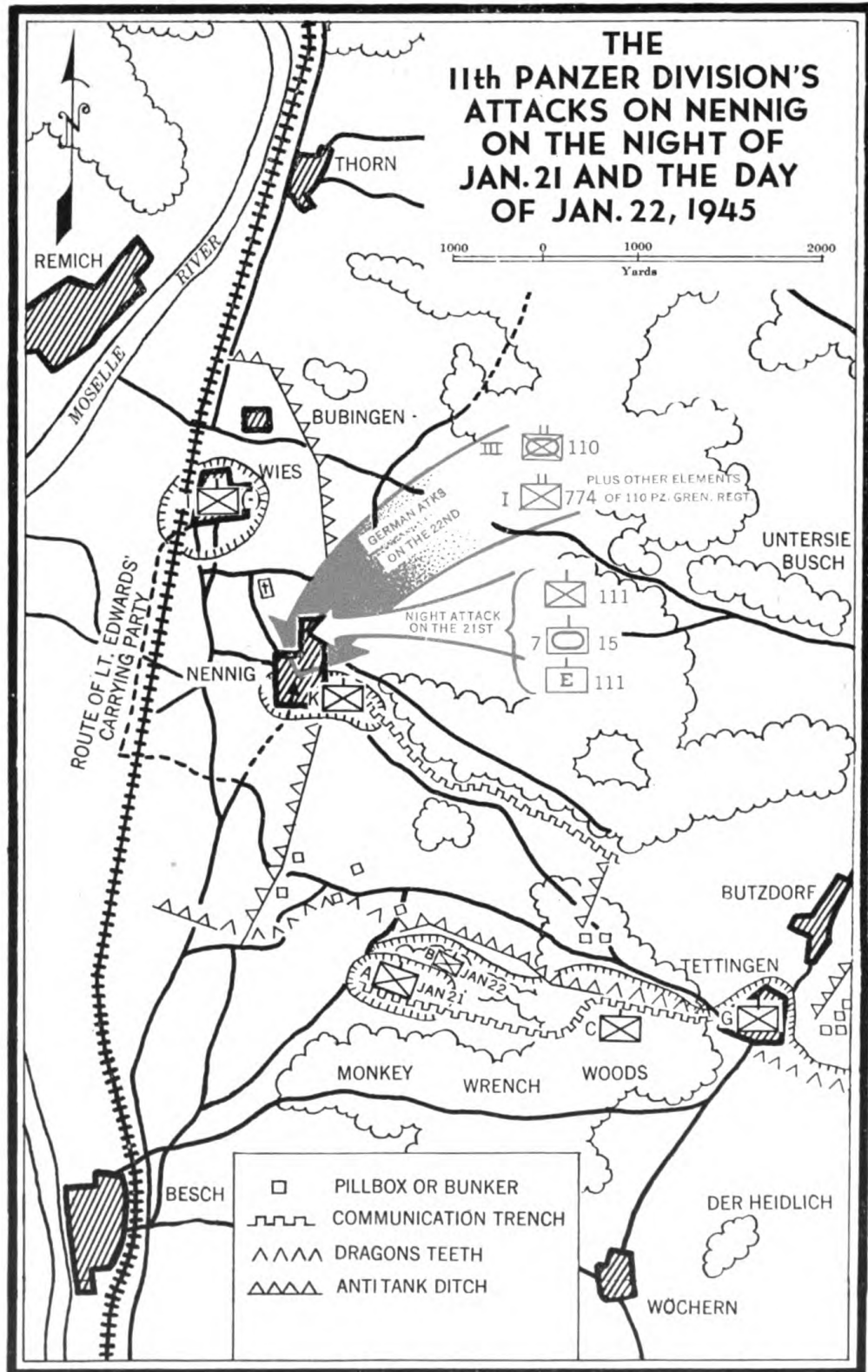
At 2045 hours that same evening, tanks were heard again in the vicinity of Nennig and shortly thereafter an attack was launched from the hill east of town. As the Panzergrenadiers charged down the slope, illuminating shells were fired from the 60mm mortars. They burst high above the attackers and the men of Company K saw hordes of infantry, supported by four tanks, sweeping toward town. As final protective line fires were laid, the darkness was pierced by livid streaks of crossing tracers while the mortars and artillery filled the gaps in the line of fire of the automatic weapons. Into this screaming hell the Grenadiers advanced. Most of the attackers never made the edge of town. Those few who did were soon eliminated.

For the most part the following day passed quietly and without major incident. Artillery, rocket, mortar and machine-gun fire fell constantly all through the battalion area. The cold was intense and added to the discomfort of holding the three towns. Looking toward the enemy lines, the men of the 3d Battalion waited and wondered where the next blow would fall. It was apparent that the 11th Panzer Division was under orders to eliminate the American penetrations into the very marrow of the Siegfried Switch position. Past German failures only prophesied future attacks.

At about 2100 hours on the 21st, the northern half of Nennig was hit by a barrage that rocked the town as the enemy artillery laid its preparation for another attack by the Ghost Division. German batteries fired at a terrific rate and the sky above Nennig grew bright with the glare of bursting shells. As quickly as it had begun, the artillery fire lifted and shifted to Wies and Besch. German infantry and tanks pushed down the hill to the east of Nennig and again made a wild attempt to take the town by storm.

Within minutes of the start of this fearful barrage, the guns of the 356th Field Artillery Battalion took up the German challenge. Gradually the other American artillery battalions within range added the weight of their fire. Across the Moselle, Company M's mortars regis-

# THE 11th PANZER DIVISION'S ATTACKS ON NENNIG ON THE NIGHT OF JAN. 21 AND THE DAY OF JAN. 22, 1945





*Casualties in men and matériel were frequent on Nennig's fire-swept streets*

tered on the draw east of Nennig and there the enemy dead were piled high the following morning. In an attempt to ring the attacked town with protective fire, the guns of the Division artillery poured out concentration after concentration, without regard to the existing ammunition limitations.

But, despite the terrific volume of fire brought to bear, the Germans surged down the hill. An enemy tank fought its way to the OP in the center of town and knocked out a 57mm gun and two machine guns. Fighting within the town was bitter. By midnight the situation was utterly confused; several unoccupied houses in the northern edge of town were known to be in enemy hands.

Lieutenant Seeby, using the artillery radio, called Lieutenant Henry J. Fink who had gone to the ridge east of town about the time the attack started and directed him to report to the company CP. On arriving Lieutenant Fink was given fifteen men and instructed to clear the enemy from the houses they had gained. This group succeeded in pushing the Germans from the church, but were then held up by fire from the former OP. An estimate of the situation disclosed that a

greater force than that available would be necessary to complete the mission. This fact was reported to the company commander.

By morning the enemy had worked three tanks into town and had forced Company K into the southern half of Nennig. At 0800 hours the company launched a bitter counterattack which gained some ground. But, the nearly exhausted infantrymen were unable to get close enough to the tanks to knock them out. Realizing that the new position could not be held, orders were issued for a withdrawal to the small creek that ran through town from east to west. There a new defensive line was established.

The panzers and Panzergrenadiers were also giving the troops in Berg a rough time. During daylight hours at least, the only contact Lieutenant Doherty and his men had with the rest of Company I in Wies was by radio as the ground between the two towns was in full view of the enemy and constantly swept by fire. After dark on the 20th, Private First Class James V. Collins, a 2d Platoon runner, made his way from Schloss Berg to Wies after several narrow escapes. He reported to Captain Williams that the platoon was in bad shape. The enemy had attacked with infantry and tanks; the tanks, using point-blank fire, had blasted holes in the walls of the castle through which they continued to fire in attempts to knock out American resistance. Occasionally the platoon was able to make radio contact and obtain artillery support, but for the most part Lieutenant Doherty's men relied on their bazookas to keep the panzers at bay. Ammunition for these weapons was nearly exhausted and the 2d Platoon urgently requested a resupply.

A carrying party was quickly formed and Private First Class Collins led it back toward the Schloss. Repeatedly this group was brought under fire and was unable to reach the castle. Following this a six-man combat patrol was organized and set off to fight through to the 2d Platoon. It encountered heavy enemy machine-gun fire. When four of the patrol had been killed the survivors returned to Wies.

Meanwhile the Germans persisted in their attempts to take Schloss Berg and eventually the two squads of the 2d Platoon and the section of HMGs in the castle were lost to the enemy. There was no further word from this group and subsequently an American machine gun was employed against the 3d Battalion. The remaining squad of the platoon, under the command of Staff Sergeant Thomas W. Fontaine, then found themselves out of contact with both platoon and company. With them they had only their rifles and they could see and hear numerous

enemy tanks from their position. Certain that the rest of the platoon had been captured by the Germans and unaware of the fate of the company itself, the squad leader decided to withdraw. By a circuitous route he led his men back to Besch and from there rejoined Company I in Wies.

The initial enemy thrust into Nennig isolated elements of the 1st Platoon, under Lieutenant Carpenter, in a house in the northeastern corner of the town. A German tank approaching this building, as close as the narrow, rubble-filled street would permit, opened fire. After he had pumped several rounds into the building, the tank commander called on the Americans to surrender. Lieutenant Carpenter told him to "blow it . . ." and the action continued. When the Germans found they were unable either to reduce the position or talk the Americans into surrender, they placed machine guns to cover all exits from the position and laid siege.

During the day of the 22d, the Germans began to infiltrate the southern half of Nennig. Again and again Lieutenant Seeby's men drove them back, but the depleted company did not have sufficient strength to stave off the invaders completely. Therefore, Company A of the 7th Armored Infantry Battalion, part of CCA of the 8th Armored Division which had come under Division control for a short period of battle indoctrination, was committed. One platoon of Company A assisted Lieutenant Seeby's men in completely clearing the southern half of Nennig. That night other elements of Company A relieved the positions on the ridge and a portion of the relieved troops were then sent forward to strengthen the line in the center of town. Despite this reinforcement, an enemy attack during the night succeeded in driving back those elements of Company K and Company A of the 7th AIB holding the east-west line through Nennig. The Germans retook the church and several houses in its vicinity.

At about this same time, Lieutenant Edwards of Company I led a sixteen-man carrying party from Wies to Nennig. His route was south along the railroad tracks to a point below Nennig. There he crossed the tracks, entered town and proceeded up the main street to the battalion CP. Upon his arrival, Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt questioned him as to his route into Nennig. The battalion commander then informed Company I's executive officer that an enemy machine gun periodically swept the street he had used. Needless to say, the carrying party left town by an alternate route.

During this fighting on the 22d of January, the III Battalion of the

110th Panzergrenadiers was so badly cut up the unit was dissolved and its surviving personnel distributed among the other battalions of the regiment. The I Battalion of the 714th Regiment, redesignated the 774th, arrived from east of the Saar and was immediately committed.

To halt the German gains in Nennig, the 2d Battalion, 376th, was brought forward from its reserve position at Monneren on the morning of the 23d. Company E moved north along the Moselle to the railroad tracks west of Nennig, which were again used as a line of departure. At 0700 hours under a heavy artillery preparation, the attack began with the 1st Platoon moving against Nennig and the 2d against Berg.

Commanded by Lieutenant Gus E. Wilkins, the 1st Platoon and Staff Sergeant David H. Godfrey's 60mm mortar squad pushed into the northwestern part of Nennig against slight resistance. They had taken four houses and twenty-seven prisoners when three Mark IVs appeared on the scene. The advance halted. Technical Sergeant Nathaniel Isaacman, the Platoon Sergeant, and Private John F. Pietrzah made their way to the roof of the nearest building and worked forward over the roof tops while enemy machine guns in Berg sniped at them. When they gained a position above the leading tank, Private Pietrzah put his bazooka into action. With the second round a perfect hit was scored and the vehicle burst into flame. This second-story bazooka team next directed its fire against the last Mark IV, setting it afire with a single round; thus trapping the middle tank which was knocked out with a rifle grenade by Private Albert J. Beardsley. Enemy tankers who attempted to escape from their burning vehicles were cut down by rifle fire.

Meanwhile, from the south, Company A of the 7th AIB and elements of Company K were again attacking north. Company A took the left of the town; Lieutenant Seeby's men the right. This attack moved forward successfully, overrunning seven machine guns, including one lost by Company M earlier in the Nennig fight.

By noon the 1st Platoon of Company E was holding several houses in Nennig and the 2d was halted about three hundred yards beyond its line of departure by heavy machine-gun fire which was being received from three directions. All but one of the tanks being supported by the 3d Platoon had been knocked out leaving Lieutenant Bernard F. Simuro's men without a task. Consequently, Captain Simon D. Darrah decided to commit them between the other two platoons with



*Shot in the buttocks while taking shelter in a mudhole, this infantryman moves to the rear as a walking wounded*



the mission of silencing the machine guns in the cemetery midway between Nennig and Wies. A squad under Staff Sergeant Anthony S. Rao succeeded in knocking out these weapons, but accurate mortar and artillery fire drove them from the cemetery.

Company G of the 376th, commanded by Captain John D. Heath, moved through Wies and pushed to the northeast, advancing as far as the antitank ditch where they were stopped by machine-gun fire from Schloss Berg and forced to withdraw. To prevent any enemy infiltration, Company F was then committed between Companies E and G. Late in the afternoon Captain Darrah worked his way from Wies into Nennig to contact his 1st Platoon. At 2000 hours the remainder of Company E was withdrawn and brought into Nennig to reinforce its defenses.

Well after dark Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt and Lieutenant Fink worked their way into position some twenty-five yards from the house in which Lieutenant Carpenter and his men were isolated. Enemy machine guns still covered all approaches to the building. The battalion commander called to Lieutenant Carpenter and told him to hold fast as he would be relieved shortly.

While the fighting had been particularly bitter all during the day of the 23rd, it was infinitely more costly to the enemy than to the defenders of Nennig. As the 2d Battalion, 376th, moved to the assistance of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men, the attackers were reinforced by the I and II Battalions of the 111th Panzergrenadiers. During the day five Mark IVs were knocked out in the streets of Nennig but still the Germans were unable to force a decision. In a final desperate attempt, the I Battalion of the 110th was thrown into the fray with orders to take the town at all costs. It failed. Both the 110th and 111th had by now lost fifty percent of the personnel they brought into The Triangle.

On the morning of the 24th at 0700 hours, the 1st Platoon of Company E and a composite platoon from the 3d Battalion attacked to clear the houses in Nennig still held by the enemy. Three and a half hours later the town was once again entirely in American hands.

The next problem was the reduction of Schloss Berg which commanded all the terrain in the vicinity of Wies and Nennig. This castle and the town of Berg constituted a salient into the American lines. As long as they were held by the enemy, the western flank of the Division line was unsafe. Hence, this ground had to be retaken. An attack was planned which called for Company G to drive southeast from Wies while Company E moved north from Nennig. At 1330



*Schloss Berg*

hours, a tank destroyer pumped several rounds into the nearest house in Berg and the 3d Platoon of Company E, commanded by Lieutenant Simuro, charged across the hundred yards of open ground to this building. In the wild dash across this fire-swept area, the platoon leader was wounded but continued to lead his men. Shortly after the house was occupied, a Mark IV tank began firing into the building. At the same time enemy artillery, mortars and machine guns concentrated on the house.

To relieve some of the pressure on Lieutenant Simuro's men, a squad of the 2d Platoon under Sergeant Ray Ketner seized a second house in Berg. One of the supporting TDs in Nennig accounted for the Mark IV, but the intense enemy fire continued. Consequently, Captain Darrah decided to withdraw his men before they were annihilated. Of the forty men in the 3d Platoon who made the dash into Berg only seventeen returned.

Company G, attacking from the northwest, also encountered trouble. The 3d Platoon received heavy mortar fire as it raced across the open ground in front of Schloss Berg. About a hundred yards from the castle was an antitank ditch and in this the troops took cover. Shortly

thereafter four German machine guns opened fire, their bullets grazing the lip of the ditch showered the men with snow. The ice at the bottom of the tank trap was not thick enough to support the weight of a man and the troops were soon soaked from the hips down. Reconnaissance parties explored the ditch but there was no escape. In one direction it became impassable; in the other it led deep into the German lines. Upon learning that there was no possibility of maneuvering, a message was radioed to the company commander explaining the situation. As a result, the 1st Platoon was committed on the right in an attempt to break into Berg itself. The platoon reached the outskirts of town only to be stopped by machine-gun and artillery fire. Again and again American tank destroyers and the artillery pounded the castle without apparent results. The German machine guns continued to fire.

In the antitank ditch, the wet clothing on the men froze in a matter of minutes. Then the canteens froze and later the radio did likewise. About dark, the aid man decided to attempt the evacuation of one of the wounded and started toward Wies with his patient. An hour later he returned with word that a smoke screen would be laid to cover the platoon's withdrawal. As the smoke descended, the platoon took off pell-mell for Wies.

That evening General Cheadle and the CO of Combat Command A of the 8th Armored Division visited the command post of the 2d Battalion, 376th in Wies. "I have orders that your battalion will attack at 0300 to establish a bridgehead for the armor which will then pass through you and continue the attack," said General Cheadle. Lieutenant Colonel Martin replied that his men were exhausted and that the battalion was so far understrength it could not possibly accomplish the task. While ready to obey the order if so directed, he suggested a night attack by a fresh battalion. The situation was discussed at length and permission was finally obtained from Division to have the 7th Armored Infantry Battalion attack at 0600 hours. The armored infantry moved out on schedule to their first fire fight. Observed by General Malony and their own CG, they advanced across the open ground and closed on Berg. Relentlessly the battle continued throughout the day with the enemy contending bitterly for this valuable piece of terrain. By 1630 hours on the 25th, all of Berg was cleared by the 7th AIB which suffered extremely severe casualties.

## Chapter 19: SINZ

AT 1030 HOURS on the 24th, Major General John M. Devine, CG 8th Armored Division, and his chief of staff arrived at the command post of the 2d Battalion, 302d, in Wochern. Accompanied by Captain Hodges they went forward to Tettingen on reconnaissance. At noon, other staff officers from the armored division put in an appearance. Something was definitely in the wind.

During the morning, Company L was relieved of attachment to the 2d Battalion and a platoon from Company F took over the position in Der Heidlich while the other platoons of the company moved into the line west of Company C. Company C then reverted to the control of the 1st Battalion, but remained in position. Following this, Companies A and B shifted to the right, relieving the two platoons of Company F, on the left of Captain Marek's men. These platoons of Company F then reverted to battalion reserve in Wochern. Object of these shifts was to facilitate the relief of the 1st Battalion, 302d, by the 1st Battalion, 376th, the night of the 25th, and the relief of the 2d Battalion, 302d, by the 1st Battalion, 302d, during the early morning hours of the 26th.

On the morning of the 25th, General Malony dictated his order for the attack on Sinz, located approximately one mile north of Butzdorf. It was imperative that something be done to relieve pressure on the Division west flank in the Nennig-Berg area and seizing Sinz and Munzingen ridge to the east would accomplish this end. The 301st Infantry, less the 3d Battalion, was to support this operation from its position on the right of the Division sector. Colonel Hagerty's regiment was to maintain contact with the 3d Cavalry Group on the right and with the 1st Battalion, 302d, on the left, which unit was placed under division control and charged with giving direct support to the main effort from its battle position. The 376th Infantry would make the main effort. Its mission was to seize and hold the objective while maintaining contact with the 1st Battalion, 302d, on the right subsequent to its relief of Lieutenant Colonel Norman's men, and the rest of Colonel Johnson's command, on the left. In conjunction with the attack of the 376th, the 302d was to launch an attack on the Division left flank to clear a bridgehead through which CCA of the 8th Armored Division, attached for only forty-eight hours, might pass. In addition, Colonel Johnson's men were to protect the Division flank from the Moselle to Sinz while maintaining contact with the 376th on the right and the 2d Cavalry Group of XII Corps across the Moselle River. The mission assigned to the armor was a passage through the sector of the 302d to destroy all enemy tanks and installa-

tions in its path of advance to Sinz from the west. It was also to be prepared to repel counterattacks from the north and east. The 3d Battalion, 301st, was to be motorized and held in Division reserve for use as a counterattacking force.

Colonel McClune had at his disposal the 1st and 3d Battalions of his own regiment and was to receive the 2d Battalion, 302d, after its relief on the night of the 25th-26th, by the 1st Battalion, 302d. Following the unit commanders' meeting, Colonel McClune called a conference of his battalion commanders and their operations officers to explain his plan. The regiment's attack would push through the clearing and woods to the northwest of Butzdorf, with the 2d Battalion, 302d, on the right, the 3d Battalion, 376th, on the left, and the 1st Battalion in reserve in Monkey Wrench Woods. Lieutenant Colonel Norman's battalion was to take Sinz while the 3d crossed the Sinz-Bubingen road to secure Untersie Busch and the high ground beyond.

Following this meeting, Lieutenant Colonel Miner, CO of the 1st Battalion, 376th, took his company commanders into Monkey Wrench Woods for a personal reconnaissance of the AT ditch, just north of the upper jaw, in which Companies B and C were to take positions that night while Company A set up in the southwest corner of the lower jaw. Shortly after dark the 1st Battalion Executive Officer, Major Benjamin S. Roper, brought the troops forward into Besch by truck. From there the companies moved into the woods. Subsequently, the assault battalions, 2d Battalion, 302d and 3d Battalion, 376th, assembled in the upper jaw of Monkey Wrench Woods behind Companies B and C.

Shoepacs had at last been issued to the men and it was hoped the toll of frostbite and trench foot casualties would drop off sharply. Ever since the Division had reached the Western Front, lack of proper footgear for work in the snow, during the dead of a very cold winter, had caused an excessive number of non-battle casualties.

During the day of the 25th while the assault units were preparing for the coming operation, the attack order was somewhat modified. Following the jumpoff, the assault companies were to push to the edge of the woods south of the Sinz-Bubingen road and hold there. Division headquarters would issue orders for movement into Sinz.

At daybreak of the 26th the attack jumped off. A platoon of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion laid smoke on Sinz, Campholz Woods and the road leading north from Butzdorf. These concentrations were fired in a blizzard that added inches to the knee-deep snow.



*During lulls in the firing prisoners were moved to the rear*

The 3d Battalion, on the left, was the first to encounter difficulty. Lieutenant Bowyer, leading the 3d Platoon of Company I, was at the head of the battalion column. As he reached the first phase line, there was an explosion and he fell. Men of the platoon ran to his assistance; there were more explosions and cries of agony. *Schü* mines! The platoon leader and several others had their feet blown off or badly mangled. Initial attempts at rescue succeeded only in setting off more mines and Lieutenant Joseph Klutsh, commanding the 2d Platoon, was injured in this manner. In spite of their wounds, both officers refused aid and directed the evacuation of other injured men from where they lay in the snow. The two officers then crawled clear of the minefield and back to the forward aid station in the antitank ditch some 400 yards to the rear.

Meanwhile, artillery began to fall among the troops halted by the minefield. A mine detector was brought forward, but failed to register on the wooden and plastic mines. Enemy machine guns, which had been spraying the area from a hill to the left front, were silenced by mortar fire but still the attack was stalled.

The 2d Battalion, 302d, attacked with Company E on the right and Company F on the left while Company G, which was in reserve, followed the assault units at 600 yards. Using marching fire, Company E was the first to reach Phase Line A. Although the company was slowed down by machine-gun and rifle fire from the woods to its front, it continued forward. Company F encountered the right edge of the minefield that had trapped the 3d Battalion. Several men had already been injured when Lieutenant Maurice S. Dodge, the company executive officer, came forward to see what was slowing the advance. Lieutenant Dodge stepped on a mine and became a casualty himself. Just then, Private Jennings B. Pettry approached with a prisoner. In attempting to lift Lieutenant Dodge and move him to the rear, another mine was detonated. Private Pettry was temporarily blinded, the German instantly killed, and Lieutenant Dodge mortally wounded.

Primacord was brought forward by the engineers and with this a path was blasted through the antipersonnel minefield. After the company reorganized, it moved forward to come abreast of Company E which had already reached the far edge of the woods.

By this time mortar, artillery and small-arms fire was being directed against the 2d Battalion from both Sinz and Butzdorf. The regimental Cannon Company was ordered to place concentrations, one every five minutes, on the pillboxes northwest of Campholz, as these boxes were delivering long-range automatic fire on the attacking troops as well as directing the artillery fire.

When Company E reached the second phase line, it was ordered to dig in and await the rest of the battalion. Dead Germans strewn throughout the woods attested to the effectiveness of the overhead machine-gun fire and the marching fire employed by the riflemen in their advance. Lieutenant Colonel Norman attempted to learn the whereabouts of CCA but was unable to contact it by radio. Companies F and G soon reached the edge of the woods and also began digging positions in the frozen ground.

The delay of the 3d Battalion, 376th, in the minefield dangerously exposed the left flank of the 2d Battalion. To eliminate this threat, Lieutenant Colonel Miner's 1st Battalion was ordered to continue the attack, passing through or around the stalled 3d Battalion. As the 1st Battalion approached the vicinity of the minefield it was subjected to a heavy artillery concentration, whereupon it veered to the right and followed the 2d Battalion's route of advance.



In the meantime, Companies E and F of the 302d had fanned out through the woods toward Sinz where they awaited the arrival of the 1st Battalion. When three tanks were seen approaching the battalion's position, they were assumed to be American. Visibility was obscured by the snow and heavy brush, so the armored vehicles were almost upon the troops before they discovered them to be German. As the tanks opened fire, the troops spotted German infantry advancing behind them. Thereupon, they pulled back to the rear slope of the hill to avoid the direct fire of the tanks and assumed new positions. During this withdrawal Sergeant Gilbert E. Kinyon, of Company F, remained behind, firing his carbine at the leading tank. This caused the panzer to button up, thus reducing its scope of vision. Private First Class Laverne Sinclair, of Company E, picked up a bazooka and a single round of ammunition, exclaiming: "I'll stop one of them!" When the nearest German tank was within twenty-five yards, he opened fire and blew off a tread. Captain James W. Griffin running to the head of Company G found his men slowly withdrawing. He ordered the company to hold and sent for his bazooka teams. Upon their arrival, the captain directed bazooka fire against the two undamaged tanks until one of these was set afire and the other withdrew. Artillery support which had been requested helped disperse the German infantry and the counterattack was repulsed. The companies then reorganized and dug positions on the northern edge of the woods. Enemy artillery fire began to pour into the area and casualties mounted as the effectiveness of the German fire was greatly increased by the number of tree bursts. There were no blankets and with the coming of night the weather turned colder.

At dusk word was relayed to battalion headquarters that tanks had been seen in Sinz. Major Maixner received this information in Wochern while General Cheadle was in the command post. The general informed the battalion executive officer that there were no American tanks in Sinz and the weight of the Division artillery was hurled against the town.

As a part of the attack, General Malony had ordered the 1st Battalion, 302d, under Division control, to take the town of Butzdorf. Company A, supported by tank destroyers, launched this offensive from the woods southwest of Tettingen. The advance across the clearing surrounding Butzdorf was costly, for the men were in full view of the German pillboxes on the high ground east of town. They also received fire from the Halfway House until it was hit with concentra-

tions of HE and white phosphorus which caused the Germans garrisoning the building to flee in confusion. Soon the town was cleared and in American hands, but use of the road leading from Tettingen into Butzdorf was still denied by enemy positions to the east. During this advance, Lieutenant Samuel G. Norquist, acting company executive officer, continuously exposed himself while leading the company forward. His outstanding behavior did much toward carrying the assault rapidly forward. Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Love, G-2 of the Division, and Captain Luis J. Flanagan, Battalion S-3, who had accompanied the troops into Butzdorf, were both wounded in front of the Company CP.

That night three-man patrols from Company A went out to contact the elements of the 302d on the left. Supply and evacuation were accomplished by means of a Weasel through the orchard west of Butzdorf. Company B, in Borg, ran contact patrols to Tettingen to guard against the possibility of a German surprise thrust from Campholz Woods.

During the afternoon, the 3d Battalion, 376th, was withdrawn from in front of the minefield, which had stopped its advance, to Monkey Wrench Woods, where it spent the night. Contact between companies was maintained during lulls in the enemy's artillery concentrations.

When the 1st Battalion, 376th, passed through Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's troops, it had orders to coordinate with the 2d Battalion 302d. Company B soon made contact with Company F and tied in on the left flank of the latter unit while Company C went into position farther to the left. Captain Chester B. Dadisman, commanding Company A of the 376th, remained in reserve in the antitank ditch in Monkey Wrench Woods. Interested in discovering a satisfactory route of supply and evacuation for the rest of the battalion, he sent Sergeant Joseph Sanniec and four men to check the Nennig-Tettingen road for mines. While on this mission, Sergeant Sanniec observed several figures in GI overcoats north of the road. He sent Private First Class K. O. Kettler across a gully and into the clearing beyond to investigate. As Kettler worked his way forward he called out: "Who is it?" The men yelled back, "L Company! Get out—Germans are on three sides!"

Company A's patrol withdrew and the incident was reported to Captain Frank Malinski, the battalion S-3. A stronger patrol was organized and Captain Edwin Brehio accompanied the group that

returned to the position in question. Using his glasses, the captain verified the fact that the men were Americans and four BAR men went forward to cover the withdrawal of Technical Sergeant Petry's men from the orchard. Four of the Company L men had to be carried to the rear. At the antitank ditch in which Company A was located, they were fed and from there were sent to the aid station in Besch.

At the clearing station, Technical Sergeant Arnold A. Petry, the platoon sergeant who only six years earlier had been a member of the Hitler Youth in Germany, recounted the activities of the two squads in the orchard after Lieutenant Travers and his patrol left for Besch to obtain aid on the 20th. Food had been an immediate problem as each of the men had carried only one can of C ration. During a lull in the artillery fire, the two dead Germans closest to the position were searched; their haversacks yielded one thick slice of black bread, a bag of biscuits and a can of meat. When one of the men remembered that he had left a can of C rations in a foxhole occupied earlier in the day, Staff Sergeant Victor J. Carnaghi of the 3d Squad crawled back to retrieve the precious food. This hole was almost fifty yards away, over the crest and down the reverse slope. The sergeant made the trip safely only to discover the enemy's artillery had felled a large tree across the foxhole in question. The food was definitely beyond reach.

As the afternoon progressed the sounds of battle east and west of the orchard grew ever fainter. When the sun began to set and there was still no word from the platoon leader or sign of a relief force, the troops resigned themselves to the fact that the patrol had not gotten through. Guard shifts were arranged and the squads settled down to wait out the long, cold night. With the coming of dawn there was still no sign of relief from battalion; spirits ebbed but the isolated infantrymen resolved not to surrender under any circumstances. Day followed day and as the food gave out, the cold bit to the very marrow.

On the third night of the siege, the men held a council of war and agreed to attempt a break for the American lines that night, striking directly east toward Nennig. Private First Class John A. Dresser and Private First Class James E. Meneses, acting as scouts, again and again ran into German outposts. In despair the squads pulled back to the foxholes in the orchard and the siege continued. Nightly, thereafter, three-man patrols were sent out to seek a route through the enemy cordon, but without success.

Only slightly less annoying than the pangs of hunger was the throat-parching thirst the men suffered despite the cold. They soon discovered



Technical Sergeant Arnold A. Petry and some of his men following their rescue from the orchard between Nennig and Tettingen

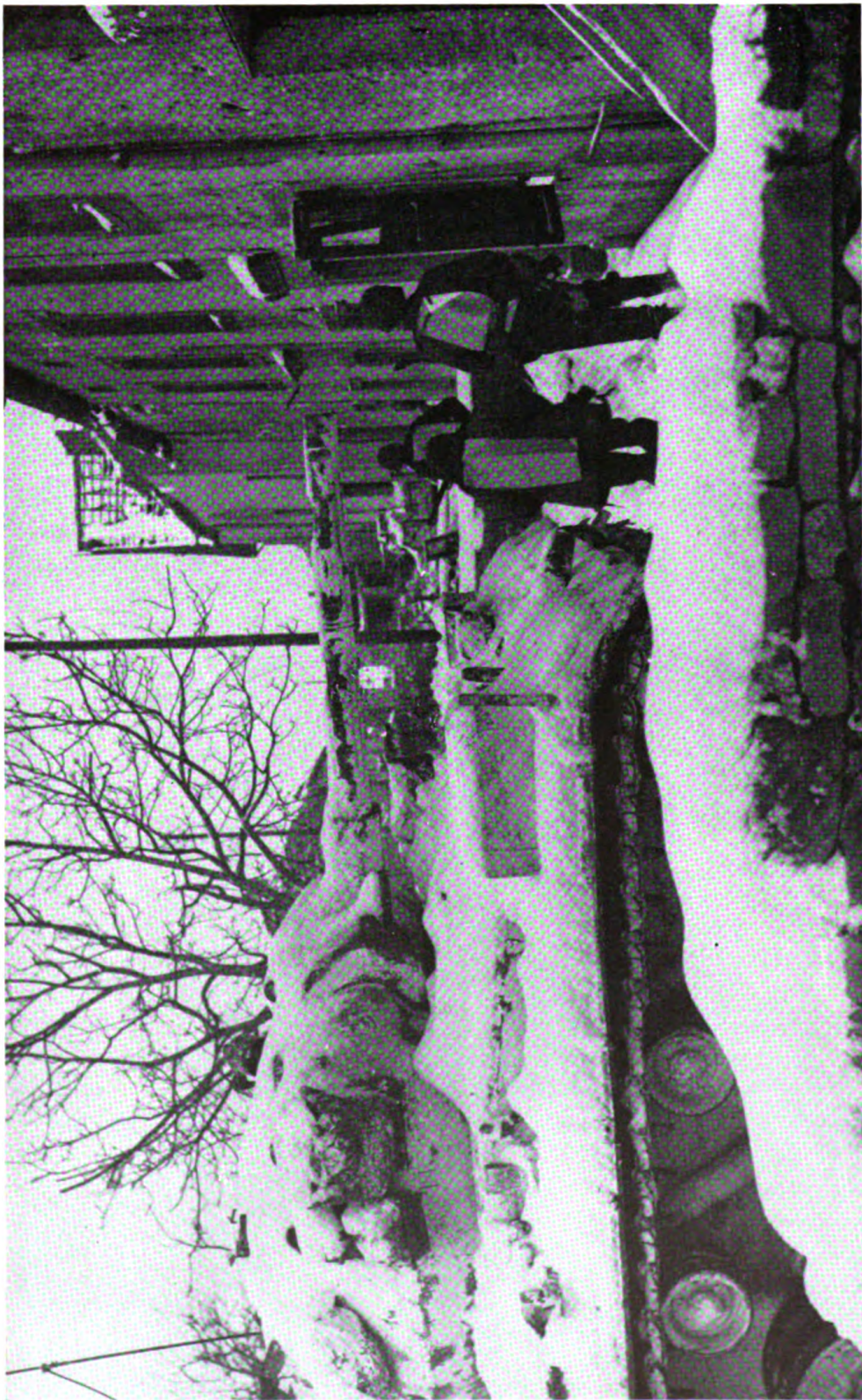
that eating snow was unsatisfactory. For the most part they obtained water either by sitting on a helmet full of snow until it melted or by moving in small groups, after dark, to a brook located in a small draw near the orchard. On the fifth night Private First Class Earl Freeman was killed instantly by a shell fragment while on a water detail.

With each passing day the outlook became blacker, but Sergeant Petry's men were still determined not to surrender. Thus, they held their isolated and surrounded position for seven days until relieved by the rescue party from Company A.

The 302d Infantry, less its 1st and 2d Battalions, and with the 2d Battalion, 376th, attached, also attacked at dawn on the 26th. It was to expand the small bridgehead established by the armored infantry battalion at Berg, so that the tanks of CCA of the 8th Armored Division might be committed. The 2d Battalion, 376th, was placed on the left, to drive northeast from Wies and Berg to the Sinz-Bubingen road; while the 3d Battalion, 302d, was to push east from Berg and Nennig, to clear the ridge leading to Sinz and make contact with the 376th Infantry in the vicinity of Untersie Busch Woods. This attack jumped off at 0700 hours. Company G of the 376th, on the extreme left, was stopped cold by fire from Bubingen and withdrew to Wies where it continued to secure the left flank of the advance. Company E, on the battalion right, advanced about one hundred yards and struck a *Schü*-mine field. As his men hesitated, Lieutenant Dodson called on them to follow him and led them through safely. The company then moved rapidly forward for several hundred yards. As they approached an open hill, several German machine guns opened fire; the company halted with both flanks exposed. To the right rear Sergeant Gerald W. Jende spotted two Germans setting up another automatic weapon to engage his unit from behind; with two well placed rifle shots he eliminated the enemy gunners. However, the company was still unable to advance.

The 3d Battalion, 302d, which also moved to the attack at 0700 hours, encountered heavy resistance east of Nennig and was held up most of the morning just beyond the line of departure. About noon with the assistance of the artillery it was able to push forward. As the battalion came abreast of Company E, it encountered fire from the same machine guns delaying that company. Seeing the gap on the right was about to be closed, the troops of Company E rushed the German position. This attack was costly, but it netted two machine guns and twenty-nine prisoners.





Wearing orange panels to identify themselves to the tankers of CCA, 8th Armored Division, men of the 3d Battalion, 302d Infantry, move through Nennig to renew the attack and assist in clearing a bridgehead for the armor

As Company E reached the Sinz-Bubingen road, three German tanks appeared on the right and the company fell back approximately 150 yards to join flanks with the 3d Battalion. Artillery support was requested, but through an error the concentration fell not on the tanks but upon the 3d Battalion and Company E. Resulting casualties were heavy and when the fire lifted both units were instructed to dig positions for the night. Throughout the day, the 7th Armored Infantry Battalion and Company A of the 18th Tank Battalion had assisted the two infantry battalions in their attack. When the advance stalled, these units were withdrawn to prepare for a renewal of the offensive the following morning.

The next morning, in Colonel McClune's sector, the 1st Battalion, 376th, attacked to seize Untersie Busch Woods and the high ground surrounding it, in conjunction with the advance of the 2d Battalion, 302d. As Companies B and C jumped off, Company A moved forward to the positions held by the other companies during the night, to protect the left flank of the advance. Companies E and G bypassed Company F and continued to the most forward positions within the woods. There they were instructed to hold until further orders. While they occupied these positions enemy sniper and artillery fire took a heavy toll.

With the resumption of the attack, the 3d Battalion, 376th, came forward to an alert position in the rear of the 1st Battalion. In moving up, the men of Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion gained some idea of the fury of the fighting on the previous day. The woods were littered with German and American dead and the air was heavy with the stench of charred flesh, emanating from burned-out tanks.

Meanwhile, Companies B and C of the 376th advanced to some barbed-wire entanglements 200 yards south of the Sinz-Bubingen road. There Lieutenant Colonel Miner noticed that the assault companies of the 2d Battalion, 302d, were not in sight. This meant that his right flank was exposed. Therefore, he instructed Captain Dadisman to bring Company A into position to the right rear of the battalion, as protection against the possibility of a counterattack launched from the east. During this shifting of the reserve, the assault companies continued their advance, mopping up as they went.

When Companies B and C reached the road, they each sent one squad into Untersie Busch. To this intrusion the enemy responded promptly with a vicious counterattack launched from the edge of the woods. In this thrust, three camouflaged tanks, one of which was a



Tiger, and an undetermined number of infantry were employed. Intense automatic-weapons fire of very large caliber was also thrown against the 1st Battalion; Lieutenant William Bendure of Company B and Sergeant Ackerman of Company C were hit on the initial bursts. One of the squads in Untersie Busch came so close to a skillfully camouflaged enemy tank, at the start of the counterattack, that its crew could not sufficiently depress the muzzle of their gun to hit the infantrymen. Lieutenant William Ring, who had come across the road, fired six rounds from a bazooka at the panzers. All were deflected by the heavy bush covering the armor. As the German attack gained momentum, the troops withdrew to a position approximately one hundred yards south of the Sinz-Bubingen road where a rise in the ground gave some shelter from the enemy's direct-fire weapons. This was only scant protection, however, as all companies were receiving heavy mortar, rocket and artillery fire. While the troops remained in this position, waiting for the tanks of CCA to break through the 302d bridgehead, Captain Duckworth was hit and Lieutenant James W. Cornelius took command of Company C.

To the west in the vicinity of Nennig, there was a good deal of activity behind the American lines. From Division reserve the 3d Battalion, 301st, was rushed forward on the night of the 26th and sent into Nennig. The 7th AIB and the 18th Tank Battalion continued their preparations for the support of the attack the following day.

At 0915 hours on the 27th, the 3d Battalion, 301st, passed through the 3d Battalion, 302d, and pushed the attack vigorously, supported by a fresh company of tanks. Again the machine guns and panzers that had stopped the American attack the preceding day went into action for the Germans were aware that as soon as the forces striking from the south and west joined, all would be lost. They fought desperately, but one by one the machine guns were eliminated and the tanks destroyed. The advance of Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's battalion progressed favorably and continued to pick up momentum. By noon, the Sinz-Bubingen road had been crossed and the enemy temporarily routed. Through the infantry and down the newly won axis of advance, the tanks of the 18th Tank Battalion moved east toward Sinz.

At about 1300 hours, the leading tank of CCA was seen approaching over the open ground south of the Sinz-Bubingen road by an OP of the 1st Battalion, 376th, in the woods southwest of Sinz. Lieutenant Colonel Miner was informed and without delay the battalion



*Incoming mail*

commander issued orders for Company A to shift to the left to attack with the tanks, toward Untersie Busch and Sinz. The Shermans moved along a trail to the main road where a fierce tank battle ensued. So intense was the firing that in a matter of minutes all three of the camouflaged enemy tanks were knocked out and the edge of the woods cleared. Seven American tanks were lost, at least temporarily, to mines, artillery and the German armor.

With the threat of the enemy tanks eliminated, the three rifle companies of the 1st Battalion swept into the woods. Many of the German infantry within Untersie Busch surrendered while others fled into Sinz. The battalion then set up a perimeter defense in which Company B took over the northeastern edge of the woods facing Sinz, with Company C on its left. Company A, still in reserve, took positions in the woods south of the road after attaching a platoon to Company C to permit the latter unit to extend its line from Untersie Busch across the clearing to gain contact with the 3d Battalion, 301st.

While the rifle companies were assuming these new positions, an

order came through from regiment for an attack against Sinz from the eastern edge of Untersie Busch Woods, in conjunction with an assault from the south by the 2d Battalion, 302d. Lieutenant Colonel Miner promptly informed his company commanders that the battalion would move out with Company A on the right and Company B on the left. The former unit was to advance along the road leading into Sinz in the cover of the ditch. Company C would remain in reserve in Untersie Busch. While the companies were moving into position for this new operation, the battalion commander climbed into one of the tanks to coordinate his attack with the armor by radio. Several of the tanks were low on ammunition and had to return for a resupply; moreover, in attempting to cross the antitank ditch across the road at the east edge of Untersie Busch, one of the tanks was trapped. Three others succeeded in negotiating this obstacle, but were slowed down when the leading vehicle was knocked out by an 88.

Accompanied by Lieutenant King of Company B, the battalion commander took off on a personal reconnaissance after the conference with the tankers. On the edge of the woods, the two officers ran into a German counterattacking force. At the same time, Company C observed the attackers who were supported by armor. Company A was alerted and Company B moved back into the antitank ditch with them. American tanks on the Sinz-Bubingen road lent their support and in conjunction with the rifle companies, laid down such intense fire the enemy attack was halted. Having suffered heavy casualties, the German counterattacking force slowly withdrew.

Following this, orders were received to comb Untersie Busch Woods. Just before dark the battalion moved forward with Company B on the right, Company A in the center, and Company C on the left. They completed the task without difficulty and reestablished contact with the 3d Battalion, 301st, on the left. Information was then received from regiment that the 3d Battalion, 376th, was to effect a relief prior to midnight. Accordingly, each of the 1st Battalion rifle companies sent guides to the woods east of Nennig, to lead forward the relieving troops. By 2100 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men were in position. As the 1st Battalion moved to the rear and regimental reserve, German artillery harassed the area, adding to the battalion's heavy toll of casualties.

#### INTO SINZ

Prior to the counterattack that was launched against the 1st Battalion, 376th, as it was preparing to attack Sinz, an elaborate artillery fire support plan had been arranged by the Division artillery to sup-

port the coordinated assault of the 1st Battalion, 376th, from the west and the 2d Battalion, 302d, from the south. A ten-minute barrage was to be placed on Sinz and the pillboxes southeast of town, just prior to the attack, while the high ground to the north of the objective was smoked. After this initial barrage one battery would fire on the boxes every two minutes. As the 2d Battalion jumped off, the German counterattack caught the 1st Battalion, 376th, at the line of departure, and Lieutenant Colonel Norman's men moved toward Sinz alone. Debouching from the woods they moved into the open against a steady volume of enemy artillery and small-arms fire. Captain Griffin of Company G was hit by a shell fragment as he started from the woods and the company executive officer, Lieutenant Peter R. Kelly, took command. Ten minutes later he was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire. A few minutes later, the battalion commander was wounded and Major Maixner came forward to assume command. Doggedly the troops advanced in the face of the enemy's accurate fire. At the tank trap running south across the Sinz-Bubingen road, west of town, the leading elements of each company halted, waiting for the rest of the company to arrive. From there the infantry pushed on using marching fire. It was rough going and the troops began to tire as they alternately ran and crawled towards Sinz.

An American tank which had been shooting up the streets of Sinz mistook the men of Company G for Germans as it pulled out of town. A large number of casualties had been inflicted before Technical Sergeant Edward P. Regan succeeded in working his way to the side of the tank. He pounded on the turret with his rifle butt and, yelling above the din, managed to make the tankers understand their mistake.

Company E, on the left, advanced to the Sinz-Bubingen road and, taking advantage of the cover of the ditch along the road, proceeded to positions from which they could fire on the nearest house in Sinz. When German sniper fire from a barn temporarily held up the advance, Private James Guerrier picked up a light machine gun and fired it from his hip. His tracers set fire to the hay in the barn, which began to burn rapidly; Private Guerrier continued to spray the building until his ammunition supply was exhausted. He then turned back to the nearest tank and borrowed two more belts of cartridges. With these, he picked off the Germans as they ran from the burning barn.

In front of Company G an enemy tank concealed in a hay stack stalled the unit's advance. Private First Class Edward D. Yewell, a bazooka man, worked his way to within easy firing range and set the stack afire with his first round. As the tankers attempted to escape





Looking toward Sinz along the Sinz-Bubingen road

from their burning vehicle, they were cut down by the supporting riflemen.

Private Clifford R. Macumber was the first man to enter Sinz. He tossed a grenade into the nearest house, rushed it and came out with eleven prisoners. Staff Sergeant Michael Wichic ran up the road to the second house and, while completely exposed to enemy fire, heaved a white phosphorus grenade into a second-story window. This killed one sniper and wounded another. The sergeant then led his squad into town. As he was advancing against another house, he was killed by machine-gun fire.

Company G, in gaining its toe-hold in Sinz, had lost its company commander, company executive officer, and one platoon leader. In Sinz, Technical Sergeant Fred A. Drye of the 1st Platoon initially took charge of the newly won area. Riflemen collected the wounded and carried them to one of the four houses in American hands, where they were given first aid. As evening approached, it was decided to withdraw from one of the houses which was approximately three hundred yards in advance of the other three. Before this building was abandoned, it was set on fire to deny it to the enemy and to provide light in the event of an enemy counterattack during the night.

Lieutenant Harry J. Lewies of Company E took charge of activities in Sinz when he entered town. Before dark he asked for two volunteers to cross the one thousand yards of open ground that separated Sinz from the nearest elements of the battalion as there was neither radio nor wire communications and it was vital that battalion know the existing situation inside the town. Private First Class Mark D. Atchinson and Private First Class Orleane A. Jacobson accepted the task and were given snowsuits taken from two of the captured Germans. They made the trip safely, noting where the wounded lay as they made their way back. After reporting to the command post, both men led litter squads back to the wounded and helped in their evacuation. Private First Class Jacobson became a casualty himself while engaged in this work.

When Major Maixner took stock of the situation, he found that the two companies in Sinz had a combined strength of less than a single full-strength unit. Moreover, Company F, the battalion reserve, was down to sixty effectives. This information was relayed to Colonel McClune and the regimental commander of the 376th instructed the 2d Battalion to hold what it had and reorganize. Eighty men from the 376th's Antitank Company were armed as riflemen and attached to Major Maixner. Also, half-tracks were provided for the evacuation of

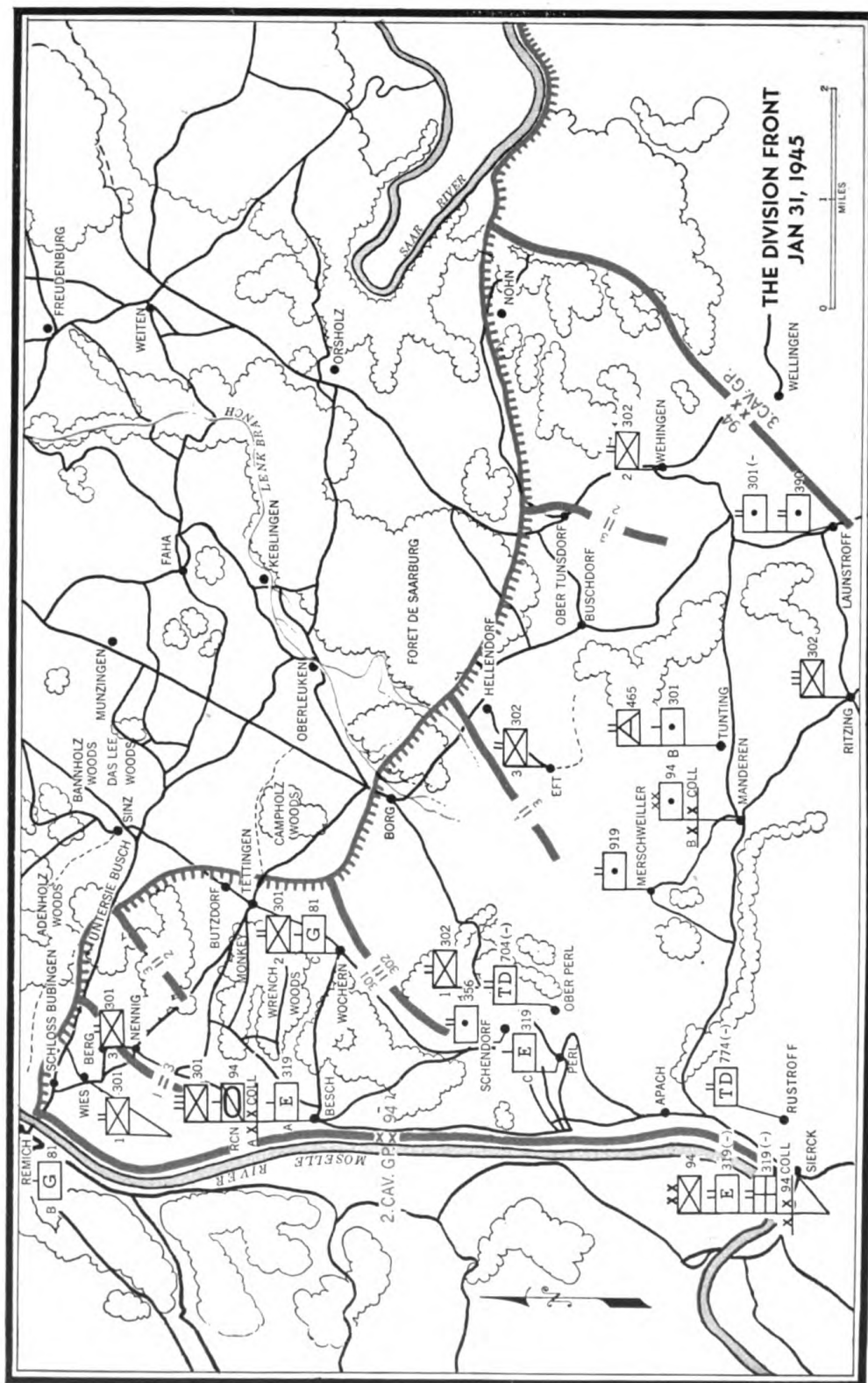


thirty seriously wounded in Sinz. Colonel McClune next instructed the CO of the 7th Armored Infantry Battalion which had come under his command to proceed to the 2d Battalion forward CP to confer with Major Maixner. Together the battalion commanders planned a new attack for the following day.

At 0200 hours, Lieutenant James W. O'Keefe, commanding Company E, was called to the battalion command post and given instructions for the offensive that was to be launched the following day to clear Sinz. Major Maixner's men and the 7th AIB were to attack together, with the armored infantrymen taking the left of town and the 2d Battalion the right. No sooner had Lieutenant O'Keefe departed for Sinz with the attack plan than orders were received to the effect that the Division had lost the use of CCA whose forty-eight hours of battle indoctrination had elapsed. Regardless of the tactical situation the tanks were to be withdrawn. In view of this development, the Division Commander issued instructions to pull back from Sinz, since it could not be held without armored support. This was done and a new defensive position was organized in the woods to the southwest prior to daylight.

## Chapter 20: INTERIM

WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF CCA of the 8th Armored Division, General Malony perforce abandoned plans for exploiting with armor a breach through the Switch position. Unit commanders were informed that the Division was to hold and consolidate what it had gained, but in the meantime the terrain was to be studied with a view to a continuation of the offensive after the newly arrived reinforcements had been integrated. G-3 was instructed to issue orders for the regrouping of the regiments and the untangling of their scrambled battalions. Subsequently, the 1st Battalion, 301st, relieved the 2d Battalion, 376th, which had been operating under the command of Colonel Johnson, on the extreme left flank of the division. In turn, the latter battalion relieved the 2d Battalion, 302d, in its positions in the woods southwest of Sinz. Upon completion of this phase of the relief the concerned battalions reverted to the control of their respective regimental commanders. The 3d Battalion, 301st, remained in position along the south edge of the Sinz-Bubingen road, northeast of Nennig, as Colonel Hagerty's regiment was in process of taking over the left of the Division line. The 302d Infantry was to hold the Division right flank and the 376th to move into reserve. Second Battalion, 301st, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Dohs, remained on the Division's right flank, in the vicinity of Buschdorf and Hellendorf, temporarily attached to the 302d. Early on the morning of the 29th, this battalion was relieved by elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 302d and returned to Colonel Hagerty's control the same evening. By 0100 hours the following morning, the 2d Battalion, 301st, had relieved the 2d Battalion, 376th, and Companies A and C of the 302d. Lieutenant Colonel Martin's battalion of the 376th joined the rest of the regiment at the Division reserve area in Veckring while Company C went into battalion reserve and Company A took positions to the east of Campholz Woods, on the right of the other rifle company of the 1st Battalion of the 302d. Thus by the 30th, all elements of Colonel McClune's regiment were out of the line and the Division front from west to east was held as follows: 1st Battalion, 301st; 3d Battalion, 301st; 2d Battalion, 301st, in Colonel Hagerty's sector; and 1st Battalion, 302d; 3d Battalion, 302d; 2d Battalion, 302d, in Colonel Johnson's area. Scarcely had the Division completed the relief of the 376th Infantry when orders were received from the CG of XX Corps for a resumption of limited-objective attacks. The only restriction imposed by higher headquarters was that the forces employed were not to exceed one regimental combat team.



- SCHLOSS BUBINGEN

In the fighting that had followed the original seizure of Nennig, Berg and Wies ground had been taken, lost and retaken. Just to the north of the village of Wies, across the Sinz-Bubingen road, was a large castle known as Schloss Bubingen. During previous attacks by the Division in this sector, intense mortar and artillery fire had been received from the area north of this Schloss and there were strong indications that the enemy was using the building as an OP. Furthermore, it was well known that the castle was an assembly point for numerous counterattacks that had been launched at Nennig. Therefore, it was decided that the Schloss should be taken and the task was assigned to the reconstituted 1st Battalion, 301st, which had suffered so heavily at Orsholz.

Company A was designated to make the attack and an artillery preparation arranged. One self-propelled 155mm gun from XX Corps' 558th Field Artillery Battalion was to lend close support. About mid-morning of the 28th, the company, led by Lieutenant Harrison H. Walker, moved from its reserve position toward the northern edge of Wies. The self-propelled gun advanced to within 150 yards of the castle, then opened fire against the thick stone walls. Meanwhile, under cover of a heavy artillery concentration the 2d Platoon, closely followed by the 1st, moved straight toward their objective. After about a dozen rounds had been thrown against the castle by the 155, its crew shifted fire to adjoining buildings. Swinging to the right, the 2d Platoon moved against the castle from the flank, while the 1st Platoon, under Technical Sergeant George Montgomery, pushed to the left.

Lieutenant Walker and his men moved in fast. Attempting to rush the front door of the castle the platoon leader was met by a hail of automatic-weapons fire. The lieutenant was wounded and most of the platoon held up. Five men did manage to storm into the Schloss on this rush, but were soon bottled up in one room by the enemy inside the building.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Montgomery and the 2d Platoon had encountered heavy machine-gun fire and taken shelter against a blank wall of the castle. Each time the men attempted to round the corner of the building, they were stopped by enemy fire. It was, therefore, decided to breach the wall of the Schloss and word was sent to battalion requesting three hundred pounds of demolition matériel. While these were being brought forward, the platoon employed the means it had at its disposal against the wall of the castle. A satchel charge



*Time out for a brew. Left to right: Private First Class George Bender, Corporal Stanley Stanek, Staff Sergeant Stewart Sweat, Private First Class Ernest Robinson.*

failed to have the desired effect, as did two beehive charges that were detonated against the side of the building. As a last resort, a bazooka was used but this too failed to penetrate. Then the platoon settled down to await the engineer supplies.

Sergeant Joseph C. Castanzo of Company A, 319th Engineers, came forward with the explosive, to supervise the planting of the charge and to set the fuze. This task proceeded slowly because of the volume of fire that was directed against the attackers. Approximately four hours after the platoon reached the castle, the charge was in place and detonated. The blast caused the wall to buckle and crumble and falling masonry trapped several of the enemy in the cellar of the building.

Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the explosion, Staff



*Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., Third Army commander, congratulates Lieutenant Charles L. Smith, to whom he has just presented the Silver Star Medal*

Sergeant Harry Schmidt, Private First Class B. D. Tarbel and Private First Class A. Bullard, equipped respectively with an M1, a flame thrower and a BAR, darted around the corner of the castle. They surprised a machine-gun crew there, eliminating them with the flame thrower and automatic rifle. The three men then stormed into the castle firing as they went. They moved from room to room killing or capturing groups of the enemy. A German radio operator was killed at his set and forty-two prisoners were rounded up and placed under guard. About this time, the presence of the Germans in the cellar was discovered. When they refused to surrender a bangalore torpedo was fuzed and thrust through a basement window. This eliminated the last of the German resistance. A patrol then was dispatched to clear the buildings in the vicinity of the Schloss. It made the required



search but found no trace of other enemy groups. Security was posted and the platoons prepared to resist any counterattack that might develop. A short time later, a large German patrol was observed advancing toward the castle. The machine gunners opened fire, pinning the Germans to the ground, and mortar fire was brought to bear. Thus, the counterattack was eliminated before it actually began.

In the area of the 1st Battalion, 302d, prior to the relief by Lieutenant Colonel Dohs' men on the morning of the 30th, Lieutenant Colen C. Robinson, commanding Company C, had organized a perimeter defense in Tettingen while Company A, reinforced by the 1st Platoon of Company C, held the battered town of Butzdorf. Company B under Captain Woods was outposting the town of Borg. The weather was at its worst. Freezing temperatures and constant enemy shelling made life both miserable and hazardous. Heavy shell fire constantly interrupted communications and caused frequent casualties among the wire-repair teams. After dark each night, the one hot meal of the day was brought forward to the rifle companies. On the 29th, Captain Woods received orders to seize the southeast tip of Campholz Woods which was in his sector. This mission was assigned to Lieutenant Edwin R. Bloom's 2d Platoon, which moved out after dark that night and secured the objective without difficulty.

When the 2d Battalion, 301st Infantry, took over the positions in the Tettingen-Butzdorf area, Company E, commanded by Captain Walter J. Stokstad, went into a defensive position in Untersie Busch and the woods southwest of Sinz supported by the heavy machine guns of Lieutenant Walter J. Mulhall, Jr. The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company G plus a section of LMGs moved into Butzdorf and the remainder of the company took over Tettingen. Company F was designated as battalion reserve and remained in Wochern where the battalion CP was located.

The area between Tettingen and Butzdorf was still hazardous during daylight hours as the enemy had unobstructed observation over this ground and his weapons were perfectly zeroed on it. Plans were laid almost immediately after the completion of the relief for the reduction of the pillboxes northeast of Tettingen from which a good deal of the mortar fire descending on the two towns was being received.

Lieutenant Richard H. Meyers' 1st Platoon was withdrawn from Butzdorf and charged with knocking out these boxes. An attempt was made after dark the first night but in the utter blackness the



**Top: Hash House scene. Bottom: Private Paul Lawrence talks over recent battle experiences with Mr. E. Z. McKay, Red Cross Director for the 301st Infantry, at the rest center organized by the latter for the men of his unit.**

platoon stumbled into an extensive minefield. After the platoon leader and four men became casualties the group was forced to withdraw because of loss of control. The following day the platoon sergeant, Technical Sergeant Tom R. Parkinson, led a successful assault on these same bunkers. With the assistance of men of Company A, 319th Engineers, the assault group approached the main box from its blind side. As the infantry came within striking distance, mortar fire which had been keeping the pillbox buttoned up was lifted and automatic-weapons fire was employed to keep the vision slits of the bunker closed. The engineers moved a sixty-foot bangalore torpedo into position and with this breached a lane through the minefield. Then the assault group rushed forward, reducing the position with satchel charges and grenades.

Frost bite and trench foot which, in spite of every precaution, dogged the 94th from its initial day on the Western Front, continued to take their toll of casualties. In the section of the line held by the 3d Battalion, 301st, the water level was only four inches below the surface of the ground. As a consequence, it was almost impossible for the men to keep dry. Within a matter of three or four hours an unbailed fox-hole would fill to within several inches of the rim. Moreover, the constantly alternating pattern of snow and bitter cold, rain and mud sapped the vitality of the troops. To increase the efficiency of the riflemen and make life a bit more bearable, regiment issued orders that each company in this battalion would maintain a rest-house in the town of Nennig. Through these houses, so far as possible, the men of the rifle companies were rotated. At the "hash houses" there were dry shoes and socks, hot food and coffee and comfortable mattresses in a deep cellar. This system assured each infantryman in the line at least one hot meal a day and the opportunity for a few hours of warmth and comfort.

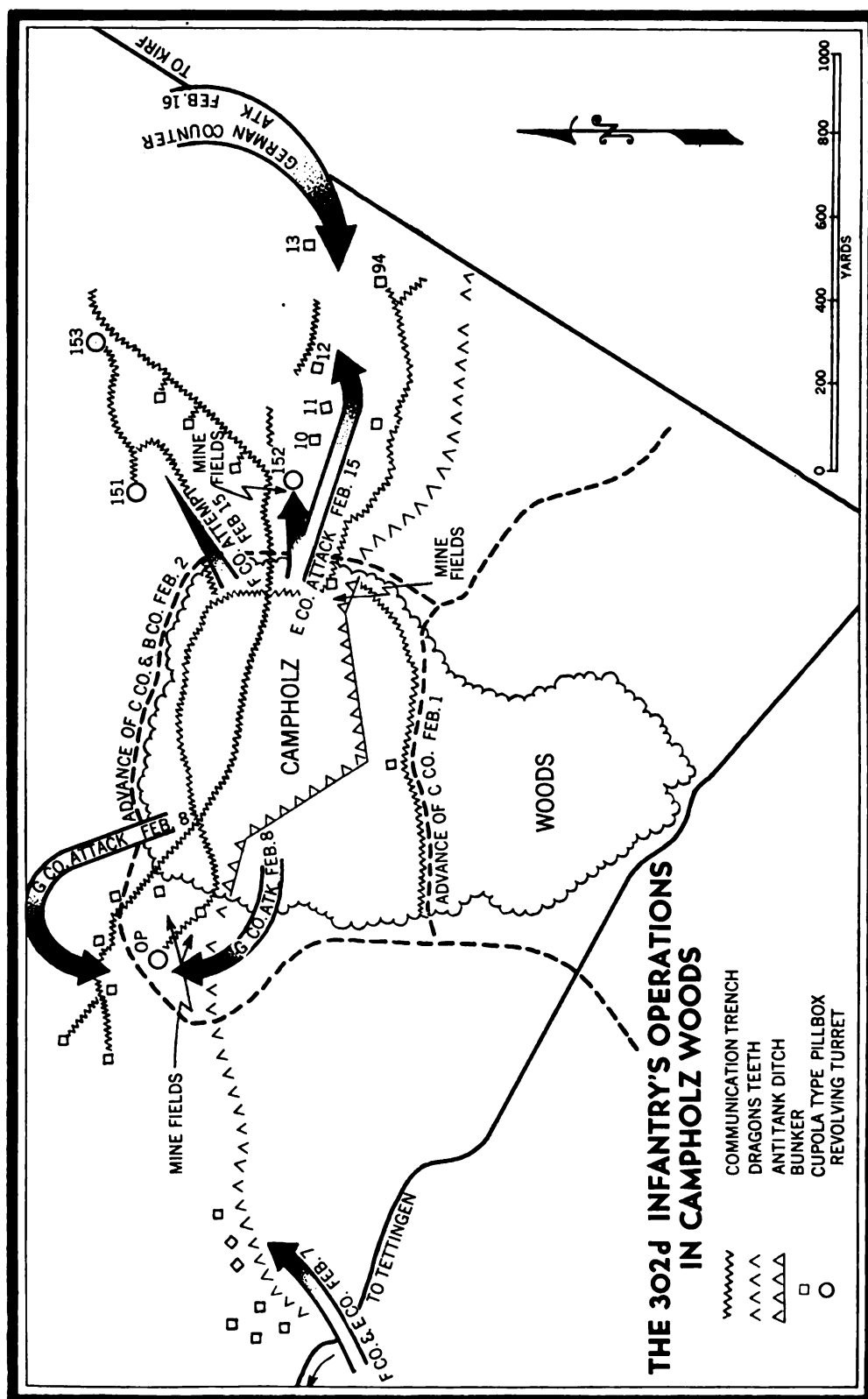
## Chapter 21: CAMPHOLZ WOODS

AT PILLINGERHOF, the battalion reserve position, the men and officers of Company C of the 302d relaxed and sweated out their next assignment. During their stay in Tettingen, they had heard and observed enemy patrols and security outposts in the northern edge of Campholz Woods about one thousand yards to the east. Frequently mortar and artillery fire had been placed on the woods with gratifying results. Because of its position it was obvious that this patch of woods would have to be reduced; the grape-vine carried rumors that Company C was to be handed the job.

Early on the evening of the 31st, Captain Robert L. Woodburn, battalion S-3, appeared at the company command post and gave Lieutenant Robinson a warning order for an attack the following morning. The S-3 said he would return at about 2100 hours with details. Though no objective had been mentioned, as soon as Captain Woodburn departed, the officers began to study aerial photographs of Campholz. When the captain returned later in the evening, rumor had become fact.

At battalion headquarters information concerning the location of enemy minefields in Campholz Woods was urgently needed. Accordingly, on the night of the 31st, Lieutenant Joseph E. Glover of the I&R Platoon was ordered to reconnoiter the antitank ditch in the woods. With a party of eleven men the platoon leader passed through Lieutenant Bloom's position at the southern edge of Campholz shortly after midnight and worked his way through the pitch-black woods to the tank trap. After an extensive search failed to reveal the presence of mines, the I&R men began their return. As the patrol moved south toward Company B's position at the base of the woods, an enemy outpost discovered it. One I&R man, Technician Fifth Grade John J. Centrello, was killed and four others captured before the remainder of the group was able to disengage and infiltrate to Lieutenant Bloom's lines. Lieutenant Glover promptly reported the results of his reconnaissance to the CO of Company C.

After a hot breakfast, the troops of Company C moved from Pillingerhof at 0400 hours, on February 1, 1945. They marched up the icy road to Borg where demolitions were stacked and waiting. These were distributed among the men and the unit moved through town led by the company commander and First Sergeant Jerome Eisler. Beyond Borg Company C, in single file with plenty of interval between men, turned west and moved toward the woods. The company crossed the open ground without incident and quickly deployed along the south edge of Campholz. The formation prescribed placed the 3d Platoon





*A Weasel moves along the fire break in Campholz Woods*

on the right, the light-machine-gun section in the center and the 2d Platoon on the left. Behind the assault units the 1st Platoon deployed to mop up in rear of the advance.

At 0800 hours the company jumped off, laying wire as it pushed forward. Technical Sergeant James L. King of the Weapons Platoon, who was carrying an A6 light machine gun, rounded up five prisoners, one of whom proved to be an officer, within minutes of the start of the attack. These prisoners were an artillery observation group and were flushed out of a large foxhole where they were manning two radios. As the company moved north it discovered the woods were heavily mined; despite extreme care there were several casualties. At 1000 hours, the communication trench was reached and into this the company moved. This trench was about three feet deep and had a foot of water in the bottom of it. There trouble started. Rockets, artillery and mortars began to fall on the woods. The Screaming Meemies were unnerving but less to be feared than the 120mm mortars, since the latter made practically no noise in flight and exploded before



there was the slightest opportunity to take cover. Throughout the rest of the day and all night long, the Germans continued to pound the woods. Casualties were heavy because of the number of tree bursts, though four men were killed by direct hits. During the night, Company B moved forward and assumed responsibility for the eastern half of the woods as far north as the communication trench. The fire break that ran north and south through the center of Campholz was used as the boundary between companies.

Plans called for a resumption of the attack the following morning to take the north half of the woods. Lieutenant Charles F. Ehrenberg of the 301st Field Artillery arranged for a ten-minute preparation on the antitank ditch which in some places was only fifty yards from the communication trench. At 0850 hours, the artillery came in on the nose. In the communication trench the riflemen crouched and waited. While their supporting artillery crashed in front of the company line, German mortar and artillery shells fell on and behind them.

At 0900 hours, the companies rose and moved forward. Light and heavy machine guns, BARs, *Schmeissers* and MG42s added their clatter to the noise of the artillery. The troops struggled forward and into the antitank ditch which proved a considerable obstacle. This ditch was twelve feet across and twenty feet deep with a muddy, slippery bottom. As Staff Sergeant Jack Cox scrambled out of the tank trap, he came face to face with one of the four hastily emplaced German machine guns that had been delivering fire against the company as it advanced. Without a wasted motion, the sergeant killed one of the gunners, wounded a second and took the third prisoner.

The 3d Platoon of Company B which had swung to the right to take a huge six-room pillbox, stalled after the NCO leading the unit was killed by sniper fire. When Captain Woods came to the platoon it was deployed around the pillbox but making no headway. Under the direction of the company commander the attack was resumed. Firing ports of the box were buttoned up and a beehive charge detonated on one of the apertures. Into the resulting hole a white phosphorus grenade was tossed. Shortly thereafter, a German captain and the fifteen men manning the position surrendered. The pillbox was then employed as the Company CP. The attack continued and when the 1st and 3d Platoons of Company B reached the northern edge of the woods, the 2d Platoon, under Staff Sergeant Stanley J. Kurek, was brought forward to fill the gap which had developed between the assault echelons.

Company C, charged with clearing the woods in its zone, seized two

pillboxes on the northwestern edge of the woods as it moved north from the antitank ditch. The advance was slowed by the presence of numerous antipersonnel mines but by noon of the 2d, the woods were entirely cleared. Company C had rounded up some seventy-five prisoners and Captain Wood's men accounted for an additional fifty. These PWs were used effectively as litter bearers as they filed to the rear.

Shortly after dark, Company A moved from reserve to relieve Lieutenant Robinson's men. Darkness, mines and enemy artillery so slowed the relief it was not completed until 0400 hours the following morning. Due to an oversight, Company A was not guided to a captured concrete bunker northwest of the woods which the Germans had used as an OP. Reduction of this fortification by Company C had been a costly affair and preparations for blowing it were started, but not completed, prior to the relief. Unfortunately, it was not manned by the relieving troops. By daylight of the 3d, the enemy had re-occupied it.

On the right of the line, Company B held its positions and patiently waited its turn for relief. The area surrounding the pillbox used by Captain Woods as a CP was heavily mined and on the night of the 3d a report was received that there was a wounded man in a minefield in the vicinity of the antitank ditch. One man was sent from the command post to assist the medics in his evacuation. As this soldier approached the ditch, he stepped on a *Schü* mine which detonated and killed him. This same mine again wounded the injured man and three others, knocking them into the antitank ditch. Technician Third Grade John Asmussen, a medic, summoned more assistance and moved all four of the wounded into the pillbox. There by candle light he administered first aid which was instrumental in saving the lives of the two more seriously wounded.

Evacuation of these wounded was the next problem. The Germans had a mortar position so close to the pillbox they could hear the opening and closing of the steel door of the bunker, and their weapon was zeroed on Company B's command post. Once during the preceding day, they had actually lobbed a shell inside the door which faced their position. To facilitate the evacuation, it was decided to employ artillery fire on the mortar position, which had been accurately located by observing its flash. This fire proved effective and Chaplain Edward H. Harrison and Sergeant Asmussen, with the assistance of several riflemen, removed the wounded to the rear.

On the morning of the 4th, Company C moved into the lines again, taking over Company B's positions, and Captain Woods' men returned to battalion reserve.

To Lieutenant Joseph F. Concannon, battalion supply officer, and his assistant, Sergeant Robert H. Fluch, fell the difficult task of resupplying the companies in Campholz Woods. Halftracks were borrowed from the 465th AAA Battalion and with these the dangerous run from Borg to the woods was made during daylight hours. Time and again these vehicles ran the gantlet of fire under direct observation of the enemy with nothing but luck and speed for protection. At night a Weasel was used and in this vehicle the hot food for the line companies was brought forward.

On the morning of the 3d, Lieutenant Carl J. Baumgaertner and a patrol of four men tackled the German bunker three hundred yards west of Campholz Woods. Because of the darkness and fog they experienced some difficulty in finding the box. Finally, German voices were heard and the bunker thus located. When the men had been deployed, a hand grenade was thrown and Lieutenant Baumgaertner, who speaks fluent German, informed the enemy they were surrounded and must surrender or a flame thrower would be used. (The patrol had no flame thrower.) Thirteen prisoners meekly filed out of the emplacement.

At 2300 hours on the night of the 4th, Lieutenant Baumgaertner led another group against the OP bunker that the enemy had reoccupied. This concrete box had sweeping observation over the terrain from Tettingen to Pillingerhof and it was so situated, it was almost impossible for the attackers to approach the emplacement without exposing themselves. With little difficulty the enemy drove back the Company A patrol. When Lieutenant Baumgaertner and his men returned from this unsuccessful attempt, they were informed that a second effort would have to be made at 0400 hours, using the whole platoon. This meant the platoon had to remain behind when Company A was relieved during the night.

To assist the second attempt, plans were made for a heavy artillery preparation. This supporting fire fell on schedule, chewing up the ground around the bunker, and as it lifted the platoon rushed forward to within ten yards of the position. A vicious grenade battle followed, but the platoon was repulsed. They withdrew carrying off their wounded; the dead had to be abandoned.

On the 4th of February, Major Warren F. Stanion assumed command of the 1st Battalion; Captain Woods became battalion executive officer; and Lieutenant Joseph Wancio took Company B. The following after-

noon Company C received orders to exchange positions with Company B and to be prepared to jump off against the OP bunker. After some difficulty this shift was made, following which the scheduled attack was launched preceded by a fifteen minute artillery preparation fired by the 301st Field Artillery Battalion. At one point the preparation had to be lifted after five minutes as it was so powerful, confined to such a small area, and brought so close to the American lines that it began to affect the troops waiting to attack. At approximately 1700 hours Company C moved forward supported by engineers from Company B of the 319th. Again enemy resistance was fierce and stubborn. Newly laid *Schü* mines were plentiful contributing greatly to the number of casualties. With the coming of nightfall it was evident that the attack would not succeed. The troops were pulled back into the woods.

During the night of the 5th-6th, the 2d Battalion, 302d, moved from the east flank of the Division line and relieved Major Stanion's exhausted companies. After the ill-fated attempt on Sinz, Major Maixner's battalion had been relieved on the 29th by the 2d Battalion, 376, and as the depleted companies began the long march to the rear they were repeatedly shelled, suffering additional casualties. Many of the men were so crippled with trench foot that walking was sheer agony. The battalion command post had been set up at Wehingen and the companies moved in Nohn and Unter Tünsdorf where they rested and reinforced. In Company G there remained only forty-five of the 156 men who had moved against Sinz on the 25th. While in this area the battalion patrolled actively and maintained contact with the 3d Cavalry on the Division's right. Two unsuccessful attempts were made by Companies E and G to capture pillboxes in front of the fortified town of Orsholz. Both of these attacks resulted in additional casualties. Also, the troops continued to suffer from the extreme cold. In one of the above attacks rifles actually froze and refused to function.

When the 2d Battalion, 302d, completed its relief in Campholz Woods, Company E held the western half of the woods with Company G on its right, holding the eastern section. Company H's heavy machine guns moved into the woods to support the infantry while the 81s went into position to defend Butzdorf. Through Campholz Woods, the engineers cleared additional paths and these were marked with white tape to serve as guides.

The first and most important task that faced Major Maixner was the reduction of the OP bunker, that had withstood the repeated attacks



*Carefully treading a path cleared by the engineers, a relief party moves toward the northern edge of Campholz Woods*

of the 1st Battalion, and the other fortifications that extended west from Campholz Woods to the outskirts of Tettingen. For this task the battalion commander decided to use assault teams drawn from Companies E and F. Lieutenant Charles A. Hunter of Company F and a group of fourteen men were to make a feint from Tettingen while the Company E group attacked west from the edge of Campholz Woods. It was hoped that considerable advantage would be obtained from the fact that the 301st was to launch an attack the same day at Sinz and Bannholz Woods.

The plan was drawn, and early on the morning of the 7th the assault began. At the very edge of the woods Company E was stopped by a heavy artillery concentration brought on their position as they started the assault; but, Lieutenant Hunter's platoon moving east from Tettingen, met with greater success. It jumped off at 0645 hours, advanced rapidly and surprised the defenders of the first bunker. Thirty-three

prisoners were taken and these were sent to the rear under guard. Leaving two men to garrison the bunker, the remainder of the assault group pushed forward, only to meet heavy and accurate artillery fire. When a shell killed two and wounded four of the small group they decided to pull back. As they returned with the wounded, a second bunker was located and taken. It netted thirteen more prisoners.

When the progress of this thrust was reported to Major Maixner, who had come to Tettingen with Captain Clair H. Stevens, his artillery liaison officer, he ordered elements of Company E to withdraw from Campholz Woods and join him. Lieutenant Lewies and Lieutenant James W. Butler brought their platoons into Wochern by kitchen trucks and from there marched into Tettingen. Both platoons were then worked forward to the boxes that had been taken by Lieutenant Hunter's men. The artillery fire that was to support this new assault failed to materialize and since the day was well spent it was decided to jump off without benefit of a preparation. Against sustained small-arms and mortar fire the troops attacked and by darkness had taken one more bunker. Continuation of the advance then was delayed till the next morning; a patrol was sent back to bring wire communications to the new positions. When contact with battalion was established, the platoons of Company E were informed they would be relieved by Company F and were instructed to return to Borg subsequent to this relief.

Five days had now elapsed since the enemy reoccupied the OP bunker. Its position and the observation available to the Germans from it made it clear that it had to be re-taken at all cost. Higher headquarters was emphatic on this point. Major Maixner decided to use Company G in the next attempt. Lieutenant Lewies' platoon along with the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon of the Battalion Headquarters Company, armed as riflemen, moved into Campholz and took over Company G's positions. Following the relief, Captain James W. Griffin assembled his company in the southern end of the woods in preparation for the attack. Total strength of the unit came to only thirty-four men. The engineers provided flame throwers, operators and demolition men which added slightly to the strength of the assault group.

The first Platoon of Company G, commanded by Lieutenant Ralph E. Ginsburg, was to circle the objective and attack from the north. At the same time, elements of the 2d Platoon under Staff Sergeant Arthur Ernst were to approach the box from the southeast, using the communication trench that led from the woods to the OP bunker. The





*This 28-year-old German soldier, a Catholic priest, formerly of Cardinal Innitzer's Vienna Archdiocese, surrendered to the Division after his commanding officer forced him to take a machine pistol and fight. He informed his interrogator that he had not been permitted to say Mass for weeks, and readily agreed to broadcast to his former comrades. Lip microphones are being used.*

*"As your comrade and chaplain I want to say a few words. When I was captured I was received here with open arms. I want to implore you now, my comrades, to cease these unholy doings, this murder. Put your weapons away; come over to us here, because it is senseless to continue fighting. First, there is the enormous superiority of the Americans in weapons, tanks and airplanes, as well as personnel. Secondly, why do we fight at all? Do you really believe that Adolf Hitler and those officers close to him can give you the promised peace? No, never, comrades! Because a man ridden by the Devil can never bring peace to our Fatherland. Innocent blood has flowed because of this man who is a partner of the Devil."*

3d Platoon and the remainder of the 2d were to move farther west and knock out enemy positions directly supporting the OP bunker.

Lieutenant Douglas A. Barrow, commanding Company H's Mortar Platoon, recommended to the battalion commander that he be allowed to place a two- to three-minute preparation on known enemy mortar positions, followed by a one-minute lull and three additional minutes of fire. This suggestion was based on the observation that enemy mortar crews took shelter in their bunkers during American concentrations and returned to their guns as soon as they lifted. The recommendation was approved and on the morning of the assault Lieutenant Barrow, from his observation post in the northern edge of the woods, had the satisfaction of watching the enemy fall for his ruse.

Company G's attack moved out on schedule and proceeded according to plan. Sergeant James E. Clark with the 1st Platoon, led the final rush which overwhelmed the objective. While the box yielded only four uninjured prisoners, the enemy lost a highly valuable point of observation. From the bunker, the men looked toward Tettingen and Campholz in amazement. Both town and woods lay below them completely visible. The accuracy and intensity of the enemy artillery fire were then understandable. That Tettingen had ever been taken and held seemed incredible.

Meanwhile, the rest of the 2d Platoon and the 3d were busy farther to the west. One pillbox was secured without a fight and the 3d Platoon's objective, which looked formidable on an aerial photograph, proved to be only an unoccupied gun position. A patrol led by Lieutenant Oliver K. Smith was sent to reconnoiter the entire area and the draw to the north of the newly won positions. This group made no contact with the enemy. Concurrently, Company G occupied the captured fortifications and supporting positions were dug surrounding them.

Late on the afternoon of the 8th, Lieutenant James W. Porter of Company B of the 319th Engineers led forward a demolition and carrying party to destroy the newly captured pillboxes and bunkers. This group stumbled into a *Schü* mine field and tripped one of the mines which wounded three of the engineers. A rescue party led by Technician Fifth Grade Robert Cole went to their assistance. As they were placing one of the wounded on a litter, a second mine was detonated. This explosion temporarily blinded Corporal Cole. Private First Class Curi and an aid man with the group were also wounded. The men called for help and a second party led by Lieutenant Porter came to their aid. Three of the wounded, including Corporal Cole, were removed from the minefield without further accident. Lieutenant Porter, Private First Class Weldon J. McCormack and an aid man then returned to the minefield. It was almost dark and visibility was extremely poor. As they placed another wounded man on the litter, the aid man detonated a third mine. This explosion killed the medic, wounded Lieutenant Porter and an infantryman who had volunteered his services. Despite the darkness, Private First Class McCormack carried the officer and the infantryman to safety. Though nearly exhausted, McCormack returned into the minefield, made his way to Private First Class Curi and moved him some fifty yards to a cleared path where litter bearers were waiting.

## Chapter 22: SINZ-BANNHOLZ ATTACK

SINCE THE 31st of January when XX Corps had issued instructions to General Malony to resume limited-objective attacks employing not more than one regimental combat team, the G-3 section had been drafting and redrafting plans for a new offensive. When finally completed, these plans called for a drive by the 301st Infantry to seize Sinz and Bannholz Woods. With this accomplished, the 376th Infantry was to move from the Division reserve position to assembly areas in Bannholz and attack to the east to seize Munzingen Ridge and the towns of Munzingen and Faha. On Division order, the 302d Infantry was to be prepared to move from Campholz Woods and capture Oberleuken. Lieutenant Colonel Noel H. Ellis, the Division Engineer, made plans for the construction of a road from Bannholz Woods over Munzingen Ridge to be used as a supply route once the troops had gained their objectives. This plan was incorporated into Division Field Order No. 10 which set February 7, 1945 as the day of attack. On the 6th, the provisions of this plan were discussed at length at a conference called by the CG and attended by General Fortier, General Cheadle, the regimental commanders and their staffs.

For seven days the three battalions of the 301st had held the Division line from Schloss Bubingen to the Tettingen-Butzdorf area. These were days of relative inactivity which gave both men and officers a chance to study the terrain in front of their positions. Colonel Hagerty's plan of attack called for a forward thrust by all three battalions. Major Hodge's 1st Battalion on the left of the line was to advance and seize the high ground some seven hundred yards to its front. The 3d Battalion, in the center, was to cross the Sinz-Bubingen road and push to the north, to secure this route as a lateral artery for supply and evacuation from Sinz. Lieutenant Colonel Dohs' battalion was given the lion's share of the regimental mission. The 2d Battalion was to seize Sinz, push beyond the town and take Bannholz Woods.

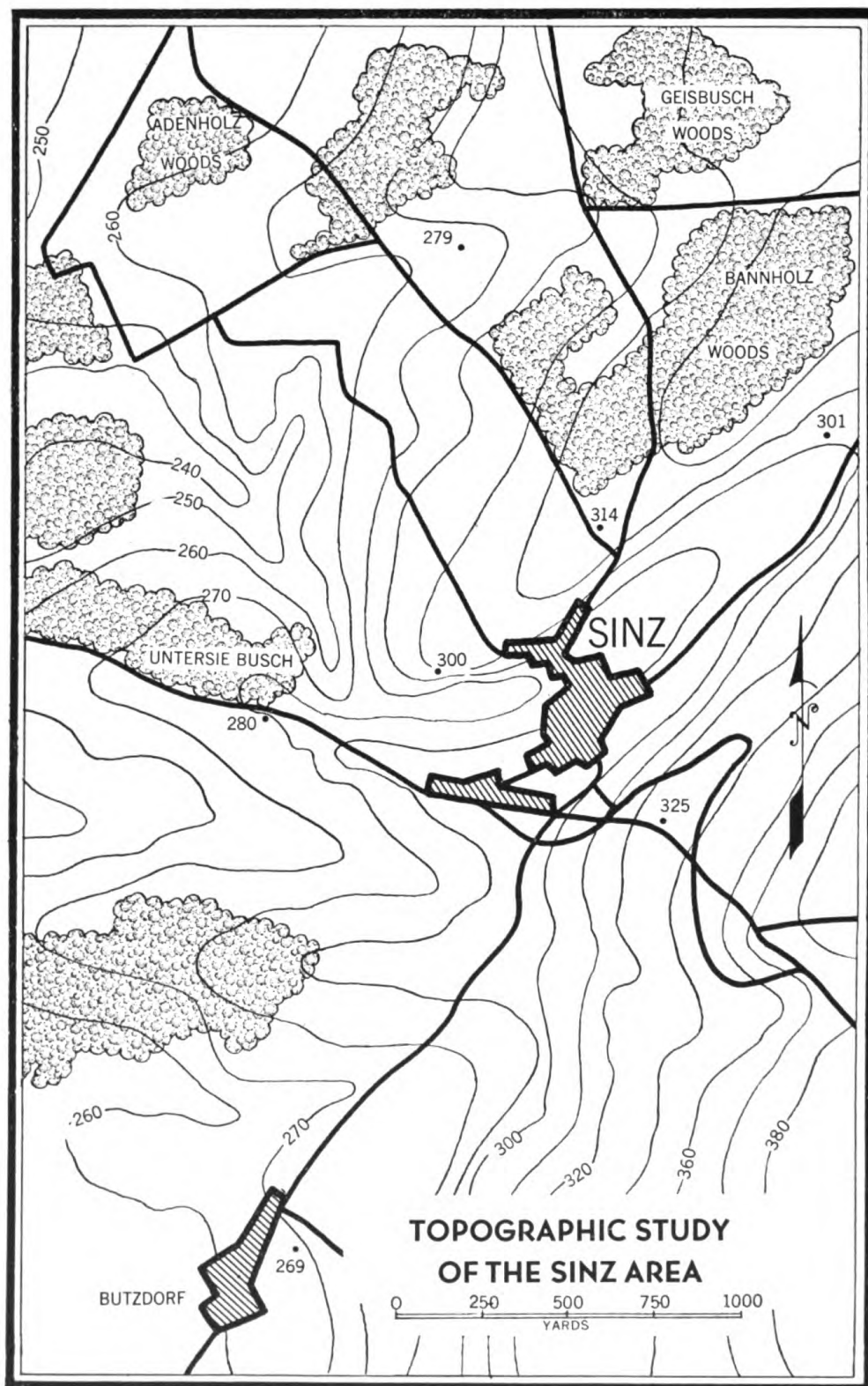
The CO of the 2d Battalion decided to use Companies F and G in the assault and keep Company E in reserve. Each of the attacking companies was to be supported by a platoon of heavy machine guns. Company F's HMGs were to be prepared to displace to Bannholz Woods on order and Company G's support would enter Sinz when summoned. The 81mm mortars of the entire regiment were to assist the assault companies. In addition, the battalion Antitank Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant William W. Schofield, was to be prepared to move into Bannholz to repel any possible counterattack by armor. A special combat and reconnaissance platoon, referred to as com-



*At the Apache railhead, French laborers unload 155mm shells destined for the guns of the 390th Field Artillery*

mandos, was to follow Company G and mop up in Sinz. The reserve company was to move south of the road bordering Untersie Busch, prepared to assist either of the attacking companies on order. For further protection against enemy armor, a platoon of Company A, 704th TD Battalion, and the 2d Platoon of the regimental Antitank Company were attached to the battalion.

As fire support for the operation, the 356th Field Artillery Battalion was to cover Sinz and the Sinz-Bubingen road west of the town. Lieutenant Colonel James M. Caviness' 919th Field Artillery Battalion would engage Adenholz Woods, while the 301st Field Artillery placed time-fire on Sinz. In general support, the 390th Field Artillery would crater Bannholz Woods, laying fuze-delay shells. The 301st Cannon Company was to lay fire along the southern edge of Bannholz at the same time the 376th's Cannon Company engaged the pillbox area southeast of Sinz. Company B of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion would place smoke south of Bannholz prior to H-hour, then shift it northwest of the woods. In addition, the chemical mortars were to fire white phosphorus on Munzingen ridge east of Sinz. A series of phase lines were selected and upon orders from the forward observers with the assault troops, fire was to be lifted successively from line to line. When the last phase line had been fired, the forward observers were to plot protective barrages and call for emergency concentrations.



The terrain over which the 2d Battalion would attack was formidable. From Untersie Busch, a narrow strip of dense pine forest about seven hundred yards west of Sinz and located north of the Sinz-Bubingen road, nearly one thousand yards of open ground extended northeast to Bannholz Woods. To the north of Bannholz was a pine-topped hill known as Geisbusch Woods. Between the latter and the northwest edge of Bannholz a deep ravine curved south between Bannholz and Untersie Busch and then ran east. The bottom of this draw was marshy; covered with occasional clumps of shrub. Aside from this it offered no cover. From the northeast side of Untersie Busch to the bottom of the draw was three hundred yards of gentle downhill slope, covered with dense undergrowth which offered fairly good concealment. From the draw, to the south edge of Bannholz the gradual uphill slope provided neither cover nor concealment. The terrain definitely favored the defense.

Sinz was a village of less than a hundred buildings. It was situated in the center of a saucer-like piece of terrain dominated on three sides by high ground. To the north lay Bannholz Woods and to the east Munzingen Ridge. Liberally sprinkled over the slopes of the ridge were pillboxes and bunkers of the Switch line.

On the night of the 5th of February, Company F of the 302d relieved Company G of the 301st in Tettingen and Butzdorf, and the latter moved to Wochern for a brief rest. At the same time, Company E of the 301st relieved the remaining company of the 2d Battalion, 301st, in the woods west of Sinz. Company F also moved into Wochern. The following day was spent in reconnaissance and in making last-minute preparations for the attack. While so engaged, Lieutenant Mulhall of Company H was seriously wounded and Technical Sergeant Parobeck assumed command of the HMGs which were to support Company G. For the 2d Battalion, 301st, this was to be the first real test. The unit was confident as the plan had been worked out to the last detail and was bound to click. Early on the morning of the 7th the companies entrucked, moved to Besch and then north into Nennig. There the men dismounted and the assault companies proceeded to their forward assembly areas. The night was inky black as Company F under Captain Charles H. Sinclair made its way slowly into Untersie Busch. Company G, under Lieutenant Knox L. Scales, and a portion of Headquarters Company moved east from Nennig along a muddy trail in column of twos. Through the darkness and the knee-deep mud, each man kept contact by holding fast to the





*Second-echelon maintenance*

pack of the man in front of him. A light but steady rain was falling, adding to the discomfort of the march. Finally the company deployed on the line of departure a scant ten minutes before H-hour.

From the 2d Battalion positions west to the river, the men of 301st crouched in the mud and waited for the first light of dawn. When it came, Sinz and the woods around it erupted in a crash of American artillery; the infantry moved forward.

To the front of Company G, the engineers had erected two footbridges spanning the antitank ditch beyond the line of departure. The company debouched from the woods, crossed the ditch and made for town. It was still dark and foggy as Technical Sergeant Tom Parkinson led his platoon straight for Sinz. Under Technical Sergeant George E. Babcock the 2d Platoon moved northward initially, almost parallel to the antitank ditch, to hit the road near the first house in town. Lieutenant Arthur A. Christiansen's 3d Platoon followed in close support.

Just after the rifle platoons had crossed the footbridges, a heavy German artillery concentration fell on the line of departure and numerous casualties were inflicted on the Weapons Platoon and the commandos. While waiting on the edge of Untersie Busch, Staff Sergeant Harry K. Poynter, commanding the latter group, lost seven men to one tree burst.

As the assault platoons advanced, they deployed into a skirmish line. The 2d Platoon on the left reached the first house, searched



*German PWs being marched to the rear past a German Mark V tank knocked out in Untersie Busch*

it, found it unoccupied and moved to the next building. About seventy-five yards from town the 1st Platoon was fired upon. They were well dispersed and continued to advance, answering the enemy's fire as they moved forward. A minefield was encountered, but the thaw and rain had exposed the mines which were easily avoided. Enemy artillery began to descend heavily. Sergeant Parkinson's platoon took its first house, but was almost immediately held up by intense enemy machine-gun fire which swept the road to the front.

Sergeant Babcock and his men advanced east toward the street leading into the center of town, moving forward rapidly. In their advance they suffered three casualties from sniper fire from the rear. This bypassed sniper was killed by the commando group which left the line of departure as the leading platoons reached Sinz.

To silence the machine guns which were delaying the 1st Platoon Sergeant Joseph Rencavage led his squad in a flanking movement. One of the guns was quickly knocked out by a rifle grenade as the rest of the platoon entered the fight. Hand grenades were exchanged and bazooka fire was employed against the remaining machine guns. Enemy artillery fire was now falling throughout the town. As prisoners were taken, they were placed under guard and sent to the rear. One group of Germans cornered in the cellar of a building refused to surrender. Sergeant Parkinson pulled the strings on two German potato mashers, heaved them into the cellar and closed the door. Following the explosions the survivors came out on the double.

With the silencing of the machine guns, the 2d Platoon resumed its advance. As the troops moved up the left side of the street, two men were killed by burp-gun fire from across the road. At the same time, fire was directed against the platoon from a large building directly to its front. This fire increased and stalled the advance just

before the company commander arrived with Lieutenant Sylvester Beyer, forward observer from the 356th Field Artillery. A concentration was placed on the building and with assistance from Lieutenant Christiansen's platoon, the house was stormed and taken. About thirty prisoners were rounded up in this building after which Lieutenant Scales established his command post in its cellar. Shortly thereafter, the 2d Platoon cleared its section of town taking about forty prisoners in doing so.

Captain Sinclair's men, on the left of Company G, had arrived at their line of departure at H minus 30 and deployed for the attack. Sharply at 0700 hours, they moved against Bannholz Woods which they were to seize in order to prevent the enemy from reinforcing Sinz from that direction. As the 1st and 2d Platoons, which were in the assault, approached the woods an enemy artillery concentration began to land to their front. Shifting to the west, the platoons skirted the artillery and entered Bannholz. The 2d Platoon and its attached machine-gun section took positions in the western corner of the woods. The 1st Platoon moved east while the 3d drove forward to seize the northern portion of the company objective and clear the woods of enemy infantry.

Lieutenant Henry J. Smythe, a forward observer from the 356th Field Artillery, and Sergeant Homer Prewitt were with Captain Sinclair as he followed the 3d Platoon. As the troops advanced Lieutenant Smythe radioed the 356th and told them to "lift Vinegar" which was the code designation for the second phase line. Abruptly he was informed that the American artillery was not firing it. Obviously, the enemy figured the American attack into Bannholz was an attempt to flank Sinz and take it from the north, since it was they who were responsible for the shelling.

Visibility within the woods was greatly reduced by the smoke which was drifting down from Munzingen Ridge. As the riflemen of the 3d Platoon continued into Bannholz they encountered two camouflaged enemy tanks concealed in the underbrush. A bazooka team composed of Private First Class Curtis C. Darnell and Private First Class Ernest Atencio worked its way to within thirty yards of one of these vehicles and opened fire. Their first round was a hit; the tank began to withdraw. A second round was fired and a puff of smoke on the hull-line marked the point of impact. Still the tank continued to move. Machine-gun fire from the second panzer raked the area. Atencio was wounded in the neck and Private First Class Stanley Bock took his place as

loader. As Darnell took aim at this second tank, the muzzle of its 88 swung in his direction and lowered. Both the bazooka and the 88 fired together. The tree behind which the bazookamen huddled was shattered, and fragments of wood and steel splattered about the little group. With three hits to their credit and no damage done to the tanks the men pulled back.

In the western edge of the woods, the 2d Platoon was engaged in digging positions when the smoke lifted momentarily. Through this break in the haze, a German tank was observed moving through the woods to the northwest. As the men watched, a second tank hove into view and both vehicles moved into the open field in front of the platoon to spray the edge of the woods with machine-gun fire. Artillery support was requested but there was no fire on call. It had been shifted to help Company G in Sinz. Following this, the platoon and the machine gunners withdrew deeper into the woods.

Panzer grenadiers supporting the tanks of the 4th Panzer Company began to appear all along Captain Sinclair's front and the tanks themselves continued to advance slowly, firing their 88s. The company was unable to stop them with their bazookas. Lieutenant Smythe feared to place artillery fire on the woods as it would be more harmful to Company F than to the enemy armor. Therefore the company commander informed Lieutenant Colonel Dohs of his plight and ordered a general withdrawal to the line of departure.

As the men of Company F filtered back through the woods toward the southern tip of Bannholz, the situation became more and more confused. The machine gunners and the 2d Platoon in the western portion of the woods failed to receive word of the withdrawal and remained in place.

Lieutenant John G. Truels of the Weapons Platoon, who had been wounded, observed German infantry coming down the road from the northwest of Bannholz. He, his machine gunners and about thirteen infantrymen prepared for a last-ditch fight. However, the enemy infantry did not enter the woods. They turned and moved northeast along a trail on the western edge of the timber.

Meanwhile the rest of the company had made its way back to Untersie Busch. They reported that the only Americans remaining in the woods were dead. Consequently, Division artillery savagely pounded Bannholz with heavy concentrations. The twenty-one Americans in the western portion of the woods, three of whom were wounded, lay in the mud and icy water not daring to move for fear of discovery. German tanks and infantry milled about their position. At one time the

enemy held a conference within fifty feet of them. The cold, the wet and the presence of the enemy made minutes pass like hours. Worst of all, though, was the artillery which rained on the woods and the knowledge that it was being fired from American guns.

The battalion commander and his S-3, Captain John Flanagan, had watched the progress of the attack from the battalion OP at the edge of Untersie Busch Woods. As soon as Company G had forced its way into the center of Sinz, the command post which had been temporarily set up in the woods behind the line of departure moved into town. It was installed in one of the cellars and from there the future operations of the 2d Battalion were directed.

When Lieutenant Colonel Dohs was informed of Company F's encounter with the tanks and their subsequent withdrawal from Bannholz, he ordered his antitank guns brought forward as quickly as possible. Lieutenant Schofield put his platoon into position in the woods south of the Sinz-Bubingen road while Lieutenant James E. Prior's 2d Platoon of the Antitank Company prepared to move into Sinz as soon as the engineers succeeded in bridging the antitank ditch. Following his instructions to the antitank platoons, the battalion commander ordered Captain Walter J. Stockstad, commanding Company E, to move to the east, contact Company G and then attack toward Bannholz. Battalion had no wire contact with regiment, but kept Colonel Hagerty posted on the situation via radio.

To the west of the 2d Battalion, the attacks of the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 301st, which were to secure the lateral route of supply by advancing north of the Sinz-Bubingen road, jumped off on schedule. Lieutenant Colonel William A. McNulty's 3d Battalion moved forward at 0700 hours with Company I on the left and Company K on the right. The assault units pushed across the road and north through the woods. Captain Charles W. Donovan's company ran into a mine-field where it suffered casualties and was somewhat delayed, but by 0945 hours Company I joined Captain Warren's men on the objective.

Farther west, the 1st Battalion had attacked with Companies A and B in the assault and secured their objective, some seven hundred yards from the line of departure, by 0802 hours. These advances gave the regiment a firm grip on the east-west road leading into Sinz, insuring speedy supply and evacuation for all three battalions.

Back in Butzendorf where Company F of the 302d had relieved Com-

pany G of the 301st, orders had been issued to furnish protection to an engineer mine sweeping party which was to clear the road from Butz-dorf north into Sinz. This was to be accomplished on the morning of the attack, to provide the Division with a safe route over which to commit any armor that might be needed in the Sinz area. Lieutenant Alvarado was chosen to lead the security detachment, composed primarily of men of the 1st Squad of the 2d Platoon, which was to protect the six engineers under the command of Lieutenant T. J. Wellom who were to make the sweep. The stretch of road to be cleared was under direct observation of several enemy OPs. Three times the party attempted to move out on the morning of the 7th, but well directed enemy artillery fire made it impossible for the engineers to stand erect on the road and live. As a result, it was agreed to wait until late afternoon when approaching darkness would hamper the vision of the enemy. As planned the task was begun and successfully completed just after nightfall.

On order, Company E left its positions on the line of departure. Using the cover of the draw that curves between Sinz and Bannholz Woods, it approached to a point where the first buildings in the northern half of town were on its right flank. There the troops were brought under intense mortar and artillery fire from the north. Far to the right, on the high ground overlooking the town four enemy tanks could be seen firing into Sinz. The company was to attack toward Bannholz, but shortly after it had been halted by the enemy artillery there was a change in orders. Company G was having trouble clearing the northern half of the town and the battalion commander had decided to assist Lieutenant Scales' company with the platoons of Company E. After considerable difficulty, Captain Stockstad made his way to the battalion CP to coordinate his attack. There he conferred with both Captain Flanagan and Lieutenant Scales and formulated a hasty plan. Company E was to attack immediately. The time was then almost 1100 hours.

The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company E moved toward the buildings on their right flank, quickly eliminating some light opposition in the nearest houses, and taking twenty-two prisoners. Then the company attempted to clear the houses toward the north end of town. At this point artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire became intense; the advance halted. Casualties had been heavy and both platoon leaders, Lieutenant Edmund G. Reuter and Lieutenant John S. Fisher, had been hit.



*Sinz . . . even the name was ominous*

While Lieutenant Scales was receiving instructions for the continuation of the attack at the battalion command post, the remaining strength of the three rifle platoons and the Weapons Platoon of Company G was pooled and the troops divided into two assault teams. When the company commander returned, he quickly issued orders, and arranged for artillery fire on the objective; the assault groups then jumped off.

Meanwhile, Company E on the left had started forward again taking fifteen more prisoners. Aided by heavy and constant artillery support, the company was slowly clearing its section of town. During this house-to-house fighting, Lieutenant Sylvester Beyer of the 356th Field Artillery adjusted each of his firing batteries on a separate house, then fired the battalion for effect. To keep the advance in motion, it was repeatedly necessary to adjust fire from an OP on one side of the street on targets just across the same street.

Company E was the first to arrive at the road junction in the northern edge of Sinz which had been designated as the point of junction for the coordinated attacks launched by Companies E and G. Captain Stockstad's casualties had been such that he requested permission to delay at the initial objective until reinforcements could be brought



forward. Battalion denied this request and the attack was pushed to the northeast, to clear the remaining buildings in Sinz.

Company E moved out with the 1st Platoon on the left and the 2d Platoon on the right of the street. The lead scout of the latter platoon was killed by rifle fire from one of the last buildings in town and at the same time four enemy machine guns opened fire from the outskirts of Sinz. This automatic fire was deadly and intense. The leading elements of both platoons pressed themselves against the stone walls on either side of the street and began to back up. A squad of the 1st Platoon, under Staff Sergeant J. W. Green, took refuge behind a house on the right of the street, but were unable to enter the building because they were against a blank wall. Technical Sergeant Raymond E. Collins, acting as platoon leader, observed this and sent one squad, reinforced with a bazooka, to aid Green. Taking advantage of some slight defilade, other bazookas were worked into positions from which the last house on the right of the street might be brought under fire. About twenty rounds then were launched against this building. A LMG was put into action and sprayed the objective. With this support, the two rifle squads rushed the house, firing as they advanced. They stormed into the building only to find that the German machine gunners had withdrawn. On the left, the 2d Platoon under Technical Sergeant Elmer W. Grifford, had taken all but the last house on its side of the street.

After a token resistance the enemy facing Company G surrendered when the men of Company E had cleared all but the last house on the north of Sinz. Lieutenant Scales' men then outposted their portion of the town, prepared to repel any counterattack the enemy might launch. Seizure of Sinz netted the 2d Battalion a total of 208 prisoners.

Throughout this heavy fighting in Sinz, the survivors of Company F in Bannholz huddled in the snow as if dead and prayed that they might live until darkness fell. In whispers, plan after plan was proposed and rejected. If the men were to get back to Untersie Busch, it would have to be done under cover of darkness. Until then there was nothing to do but sweat it out. When darkness finally settled, the group moved silently and slowly through the woods. En route the men abandoned their equipment and crawled past an enemy outpost. Finally the entire party reached the safety of Untersie Busch.

The 1st Platoon of Company E in the house opposite the last German foothold in Sinz, thoroughly searched their building and then



*Privates Arthur Benoit and Ivar Beck of the 301st Infantry dig a bazooka position on the outskirts of Sinz*

took positions in the cellar and on the first floor. It was now dark and orders had been received to take this last building immediately. The platoon planned to throw all available fire power against the building, then rush the position. Noiselessly the men inserted full clips into their weapons and waited the word to open fire. Suddenly, the Germans, who had hatched a similar plan, let go with everything they had. The Americans immediately replied in kind. Sergeant Green was moving from the house by way of a window when there was a terrific blast in the room behind him; he was blown to the ground. An enemy *Panzerfaust* had penetrated the wall of the building and exploded. Knowing the men who had been holding the room must be badly hurt, the sergeant went to find a medic. As he returned with the aid man, he encountered the remainder of the platoon withdrawing from the house. They informed him that Lieutenant Dale L. Reynolds with the machine gunners in the basement, had ordered the withdrawal as he was confident the machine gunners could hold the position from the basement. Of the three men in the room Ser-

geant Green had been leaving, all had been killed; six others in the house had been knocked unconscious by the explosion of the *Panzerfaust*.

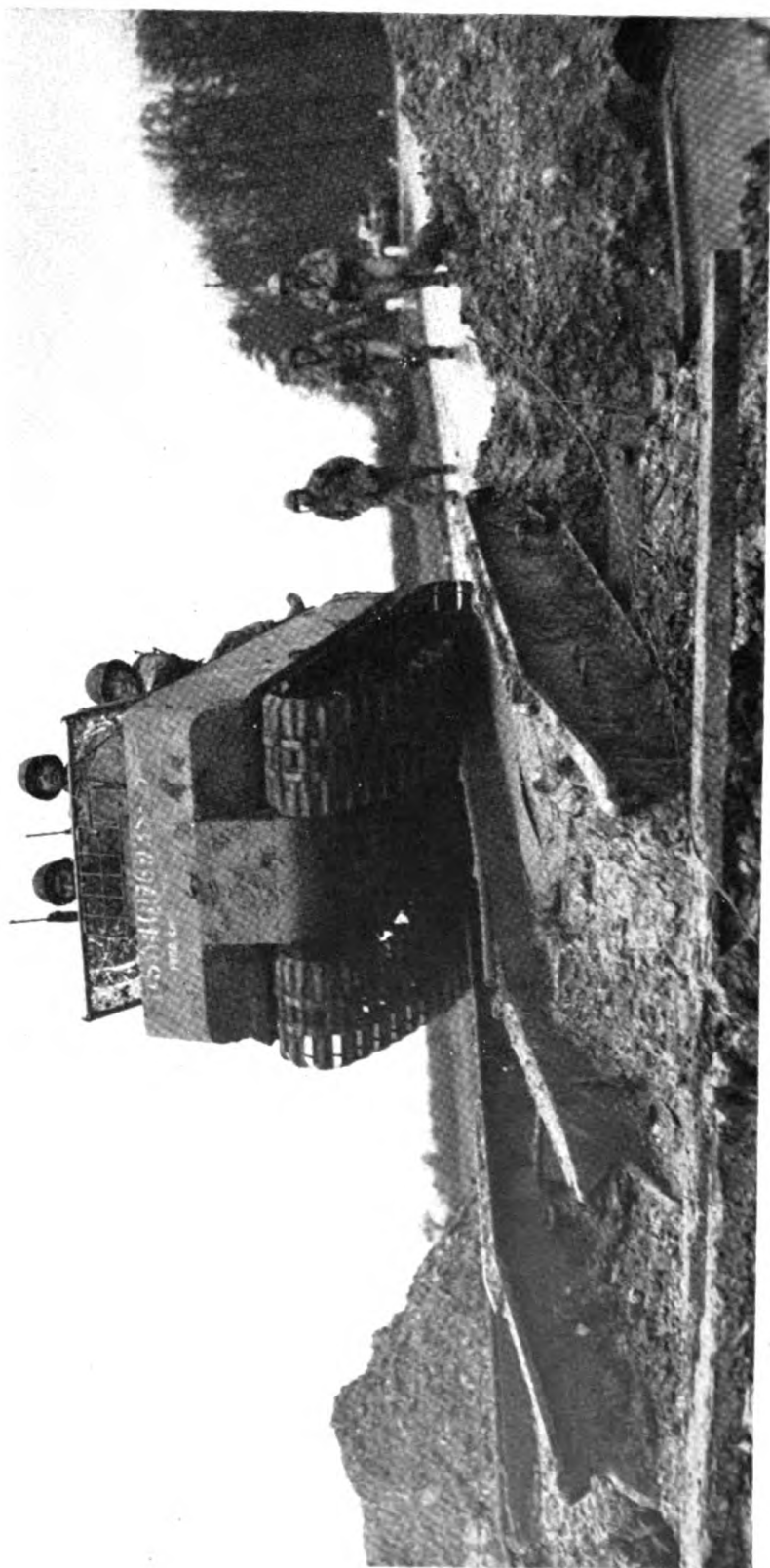
Late in the afternoon, Lieutenant Prior's antitank platoon manhandled its guns into position and prepared to repel any enemy armor that might attempt to push into the northern portion of Sinz. Enemy artillery knocked out one of the platoon's prime movers and caused some casualties. At about 1800 hours, the battalion Antitank Platoon arrived in Sinz. The men dug positions for their weapons and assumed responsibility for the antitank protection of the southern half of town.

During the afternoon Company L of the 301st was attached to the 2d Battalion and moved into Sinz to take positions abreast of Company G. Company F, a platoon of the 774th TD Battalion, and the remainder of the 2d Battalion also moved forward. Company F was charged with the protection of the left of the town and the 1st and 2d Platoons of the company deployed in the cellars of the first three houses while the 3d took positions in the woods to the west of Sinz. North of them, the 3d Platoon of Company E had assumed positions along the high ground near the draw west of town.

By midnight Sinz quieted as the artillery, mortar and rocket fire slackened. For the following two and a half hours enemy fire continued only intermittently, but at 0230 hours the tempo increased. From then until 0400 hours Sinz was pounded with everything the German artillery could bring to bear. What few roofs remained intact were soon riddled. Fires broke out and the sky above Sinz reddened. Most of the battalion deep in the cellars weathered the storm fairly well. However, the 3d Platoon of Company E on the high ground to the west took heavy casualties.

Lieutenant Reynolds and his machine-gun crew stuck grimly to their posts in the cellar. About the time the artillery fire on Sinz slackened, orders were received to take the last house held by the enemy at all costs. Time set for this attack was 0500 hours; prior to H-hour a tank destroyer from the 704th TD Battalion was to approach the enemy position and fire several rounds into the building. Following this brief preparation, the 1st Platoon of Company E was to rush the position and overwhelm its defenders. To cover the noise of the approaching TD, Lieutenant Reynolds' machine gunners and the 1st Platoon were to engage the enemy by fire.

Staff Sergeant Green, who was now leading the 1st Platoon, counted his men. The task was quickly completed as the platoon numbered exactly six effectives. All of the men had armed themselves with BARs



A 94th Division Weasel crosses a tank ditch near Sinz

and shortly before the time set for the attack reentered the building held by Lieutenant Reynolds and the machine gunners. To increase the strength of the attacking group, Lieutenant Reynolds attached five of his men and a bazooka team. The attack proceeded according to plan. At point-blank range the TD fired its mission and the infantrymen stormed the building. There was no opposition; the enemy had withdrawn from the house. The BAR men protecting the north flank of the attack reported that ten minutes earlier fifteen Germans had been seen moving from the building. They had withheld their fire, fearing to disrupt the attack plan.

With the town now completely in American hands, Lieutenant Colonel Dohs set about improving his position. To the east of Sinz, on the high ground, were a group of pillboxes that had proved extremely troublesome during the attack. The battalion commander decided to eliminate these prior to dawn and assigned the task to Captain Paul E. Frierson of Company L. Shortly after midnight on the morning of the 8th, small reconnaissance patrols were sent to investigate the pillbox area. At the battalion CP, Captain Frierson and Lieutenant Glenn H. Gass, commanding the 1st Platoon, studied the available aerial photographs and laid their plans while Lieutenant Carl Schaefer of the 356th Field Artillery made arrangements to place time fire on the bunkers to assist the assault.

At 0800 hours, Lieutenant Gass and Lieutenant John R. Fraboni moved their platoons through the eastern outskirts of Sinz. Lieutenant Fraboni's task was the more difficult as his platoon had to eliminate two machine-gun positions before it could get to the assigned bunkers. While the time fire kept the German machine gunners under cover, the platoon approached to within striking distance over a defiladed route. A BAR directed its fire against the first machine-gun nest as Private First Class Eugene Crenshaw circled the position and surprised the enemy gunners. At the same time, Private First Class Warren Dunn effectively silenced the second machine gun by killing its crew. An enemy *Panzerfaust* team and supporting infantry in positions between the two machine guns were also eliminated.

Lieutenant Gass' platoon, accompanied by Lieutenant Schaefer, first checked a suspected bunker location. When this proved to be only a rockpile, the platoon continued toward its main objective. The time fire gave perfect support and as the troops were in position to assault their first bunker, Lieutenant Schaefer shifted fire to two other known enemy positions.

Lieutenant Fraboni's men approached their bunker and called on

the enemy to surrender. Without more ado, thirteen Germans came out. They were badly frightened and began to mill about. Before the group could be moved to the rear one of the PWs was killed by time fire. A second position was overrun and one of the infantrymen dropped a hand grenade down the bunker's stove pipe. This action destroyed the stove inside and the bunker began to smoke. Upon seeing this, the two engineers with the platoon dashed forward placing a satchel charge against the door of the position. As the door blew in, eighteen more Supermen decided to surrender.

The remaining bunker was taken by Lieutenant Gass' men who approached this objective unopposed. Given an opportunity to surrender, the enemy refused. Persuasion in the form of a flame thrower was then applied and a German officer and about ten enlisted men gave up. In less than thirty minutes the entire operation was completed. Following this the two platoons secured the high ground to the north and east and organized the position. The bunker that had been taken by Lieutenant Gass' platoon was converted into a command post and occupied without further delay. While the platoons were engaged in digging foxholes around the newly won area, the German telephone in the CP rang. There was no one present who could speak German so the phone was not answered. Shortly after, very accurate artillery fire began to fall on the area as Company L's positions were visible from the higher ground on Munzingen Ridge. This enemy fire continued inflicting numerous casualties.

When the riflemen's foxholes were only about a foot deep the cry of "Tanks!" was passed down the line. There was only one enemy vehicle in sight but this had worked its way to within two hundred yards of the platoons before being discovered. Lieutenant Schaefer called for artillery fire as the panzer lumbered forward. When the tank was within twenty yards of the incomplected foxhole of one of Company L's sergeants, the NCO engaged it with a bazooka, firing from the kneeling position. His projectile struck the turret without causing any damage. This blow attracted the attention of the tankers who fired directly into the sergeant's position. Two of the company's machine gunners sprayed the tank to keep it buttoned up. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Schaefer continued to call for artillery fire and smoke, though he and the troops were endangered by their own artillery. Despite this fire, the tank soon silenced both machine guns. Gradually though, smoke shells began to limit the visibility of the tankers and they withdrew to the east of Das Lee Woods where earlier in the attack other tanks and infantry had been seen. These had been engaged promptly

by the Division artillery and did not come to the assistance of the lone attacking tank.

At about 1400 hours, under cover of friendly artillery fire, the dozen or so men who had been wounded prior to the tank attack and the casualties suffered fighting the lone panzer were evacuated. The remaining men dug deep into the hillside and prepared for the night which proved so dark the 700-yard trip into Sinz took several hours.

By noon on the 8th of February, all units engaged in the Sinz area were operating at greatly reduced strength. In addition to the losses in dead and wounded, the constant artillery and mortar fire on the town, which was averaging two to three rounds a minute, produced numerous cases of combat exhaustion. Company F was moved deeper into town and its personnel were used to fill the gaps in Company G's defenses. The location of any concentration of enemy troops or tanks was immediately reported to Captain Bruhl at the battalion command post and artillery fire adjusted, for the TDs of the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion found themselves virtually helpless. They were outgunned and outranged by the enemy tanks. As a result, from the high ground in the vicinity of Das Lee Woods, German panzers covered the road leading into Sinz with their 88s. They fired into the town and beyond it into Untersie Busch at will.



## Chapter 23: SECOND BANNHOLZ

IF THE OVERALL PLAN of the Division Commander was to be realized, Bannholz Woods had to be taken. Lieutenant Colonel Dohs therefore, laid plans for a second attack. Four groups of twenty-five men were to leave Sinz shortly after midnight on the 8th of February and enter Bannholz. They were to destroy any enemy tanks they might encounter, then dig positions from which they could support the advance of other elements of the battalion later in the day. Once the 25-man groups had secured their positions in the woods, guides were to be sent to Sinz to lead forward tank destroyers and the TDs were to take concealed positions in Bannholz prior to daylight. These twenty-five-man groups were to be drawn from the 3d Platoons of Companies E and G and from the commandos. Lieutenant Reynolds was to take the Company E group while Lieutenant William S. Sollenberger and Lieutenant Christiansen were to lead the groups from Company G. Sergeant Poynter would continue to lead the commandos. These leaders and the TD commander were oriented on their mission, after which the infantry leaders returned to gather their men. None of the designated groups was able to muster full strength and Sergeant Poynter could gather only seventeen effectives. The men chosen for this new and difficult assignment were already tired and battle weary, as were all other elements of the command.

Though orders were that the groups move out immediately after midnight, unavoidable delays postponed their departure until 0200 hours. It took another hour and a half to reach the edge of Bannholz Woods; en route the strength of Sergeant Poynter's party was further reduced. When the commando group reached its assigned area there were only ten men left, including the sergeant. Lieutenant Reynolds' group moved into position on the right of the commandos and still farther to the right, Lieutenant Sollenberger's men entered the woods. At the same time, Lieutenant Christiansen and his party pushed to the northern portion of Bannholz Woods.

As the commando group began digging positions a German flare lit the area. The men froze until the flare died, and they escaped detection. Deeper in the woods, the enemy could be heard shouting to one another. According to plan, the guides returned to Sinz and the tank destroyers were led into position prior to daylight. One of the TDs was placed in the edge of the woods facing northwest and the second was echeloned about fifty yards to the rear, deeper in the woods.

Before dawn enemy artillery and Screaming Meemies began to fall in the area and occasional small-arms and automatic-weapons fire indicated the presence of enemy infantry in the woods. Sergeant Poynter

sent a small patrol to the right to contact Lieutenant Reynolds, but this group encountered enemy riflemen and was forced to return. With the coming of daylight, the radio began to fail. Only occasionally would it either send or receive. The TD men were nervous about the vulnerability of their position and to add to their misgivings a mortar shell hit the rearmost tank destroyer, wounding one of the crew and jamming the turret. Two of the TD men took their wounded comrade back to Sinz while the crew chief of the crippled tank destroyer joined the men manning the remaining vehicle. Not long after this, three German tanks were observed in the area between Adenholz and Geisbusch Woods. Artillery was requested but no fire materialized. The tanks appeared to be moving slowly south.

Sergeant Poynter attempted to repair his radio as it was of vital importance that he maintain contact with the other groups in the woods. As he worked on the instrument which he held between his legs, there was a sudden burst of *Schmeisser* fire, and the radio was beyond all repair. The German who had fired the burp-gun was in position in the crippled tank destroyer, to the sergeant's rear. Then, to make matters worse, the NCO in charge of the manned TD yelled that German tanks were moving south to encircle the position and cut them off. With five of Sergeant Poynter's infantrymen clinging to the side of the TD, this vehicle roared out of the woods with its .50-caliber blazing away at the underbrush. Of the six tank destroyers that entered the woods, this was the only one to return to Sinz.

With his radio destroyed, enemy infantry infiltrating his rear, German tanks roaming to the front and only four men remaining under his command, Sergeant Poynter decided his position was hopeless. He and his four men therefore withdrew to the comparative safety of the Sinz-Bubingen road, nine hundred yards south of the woods.

Lieutenant Sollenberger's men experienced no difficulty entering Bannholz during the early morning hours. They pushed forward to their assigned area and investigated it as well as they could in the dark. Fearing tree bursts, Lieutenant Sollenberger decided to dig in on the outskirts of the eastern edge of the woods, though it was almost daylight before the men began to prepare positions.

The two TDs that were to support Lieutenant Christiansen's men just to the north of Lieutenant Sollenberger, did not arrive until after daylight. They had barely passed the 2d Platoon when the report of an 88 was heard and a burst of flame followed. A German tank concealed within the woods had allowed these TDs to come within

easy range, then proceeded to knock them out. Following this, the German tank moved boldly through the northern edge of the woods.

At about this time, Lieutenant Christiansen radioed battalion that his position was becoming untenable and that a tank was firing into the foxholes of his men. Artillery fire was brought to bear and the tank withdrew. It returned shortly, however, reinforced by a second panzer. Then firing was heard to the north by Lieutenant Sollenberger's men who were unable to see Lieutenant Christiansen's positions through the woods. Again Lieutenant Christiansen radioed battalion and asked for permission to withdraw. He was told to side-slip to avoid the tanks, but to stay in the northern portion of the woods.

It was well along in the morning when the enemy tanks moved in against the two northern groups for the kill. They advanced slowly, one on either side of the line of foxholes. Their machine guns fired steadily and their 88s alternated in raising and lowering. The high-velocity antitank weapons fired directly into the foxholes, methodically killing the American infantrymen. A few of the exhausted, nerve-shattered men bolted into the woods. One soldier employing a bazooka was killed instantly by return fire from the tanks. A squad leader burrowed deep in his foxhole and escaped. Lieutenant Sollenberger's runner was killed as he dashed for the woods and the platoon's radio which he was carrying was destroyed. The 3d Squad holding the southern end of the 2d Platoon's line was cut down as the men attempted to break for the rear. Sergeant Babcock was wounded in the legs and side by fragments of an 88 that struck directly in front of his foxhole. Somehow he managed to escape. By noon the whole bloody business was over.

The Company E group under Lieutenant Reynolds entered the woods with the other parties and searched their area. There were plenty of dead Germans in the vicinity but nothing more. Their tank destroyers were brought forward without incident and the group settled down to await the coming of morning. No tanks had been located in the first search of the woods, so after daylight patrols were sent out to locate any hidden enemy armor. Firing was heard both to the north where Lieutenant Christiansen was in position and to the south. Shortly before 0900 hours, German infantry approached the right flank of the position. The enemy advanced in what appeared to be a platoon column formation. Lieutenant Reynolds and Staff Sergeant Robert G. Lehman ordered their men to open fire. As the enemy infantry began to outflank the position a withdrawal was ordered. The TDs were

abandoned and the group eventually made their way back to Sinz. Upon arriving at the battalion CP and learning that Lieutenant Christiansen and his party were still in the woods, Lieutenant Reynolds prepared to return to their aid. Before this could be done, a radio message was received from the beleaguered group: "The tanks are moving down the line, with infantry, firing into each foxhole." This was the last transmission from Lieutenant Christiansen's platoon.

Survivors of the four groups that had gone into the woods were physically and mentally strained from hours of close fighting, constant artillery pounding and front-line existence. They were exhausted, thoroughly and completely. Many of the men were on the verge of cracking and some could not even remember their own names.

The attack of the 4th Panzer Company and its supporting infantry had been highly successful. Twenty American prisoners had been taken, five TDs had been knocked out or destroyed and all of Bannholz Woods had been cleared. Also, relief from this costly and bitter fighting was in sight for the men of the 11th Panzer. Reconnaissance parties from the 256th Volksgrenadier Division were already in the Triangle and the main body of the incoming unit was scheduled to arrive that night.

Later it was learned from interrogation of prisoners that the 256th was assigned a zone extending west from Sinz since it was in this sector that the 94th was making its greatest inroads. Plans called for the 15th Tank Regiment of the 11th to remain behind for forty-eight hours to act as a counterattacking force in the event of an American breakthrough. Meanwhile the Volksgrenadiers relieved those elements of the 11th and 416th in their zone. This relief was not entirely completed until about the 15th of February. Moving back across the Saar, the 11th Panzer Division passed to the control of the German First Army.

## Chapter 24: BANNHOLZ-ADENHOLZ

**B**Y LATE AFTERNOON of February 9, 1945, the 301st Infantry was spread dangerously thin. The line of the 1st and 3d Battalions from the Moselle to Untersie Busch was only loosely held. For the most part, the reserve strength of these two units had been siphoned off during the 7th and 8th to help Lieutenant Colonel Dohs' troops. Moreover, the CO of the 2d Battalion, his staff and men were bordering on exhaustion. Their supporting artillery was also beginning to tire; in seventy-two hours of fighting, the 356th Field Artillery alone had expended 6,965 rounds of 105mm ammunition. Also, it was clearly apparent that the 2d Battalion would not be able to take Bannholz Woods. Consequently, it was decided to use the 2d Battalion, 376th, in an attack to be launched the following morning. This was a change in the original plan but General Malony hoped that after Lieutenant Colonel Martin's battalion had seized Bannholz it might become regimental reserve when the remaining battalions of the 376th had been committed through it to attack east to seize Munzingen Ridge and the towns of Munzingen and Faha. The capture of Sinz meant the Division was in a fair way to break the Switch Line. One more strong thrust would carry the 94th through these fortifications and the Division could "roll them from the rear."

The plan of attack called for a frontal assault by Companies F and G. Company F commanded by Captain George P. Whitman, would advance on the right, seize the eastern section of the woods and push to its northern edge. Captain John D. Heath's men would attack on the left of Company F and were charged with securing the western portion of Bannholz. The heavy machine-gun platoons from Company H, which was commanded by Captain Robert Q. Smith, would be attached to the assault companies when they entered the woods. Once the attack on Bannholz was well under way, Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's battalion of the 301st, farther to the left, would seize Adenholz Woods and so protect the flank of the 2d Battalion, 376th, from counterattack from the west.

Shortly before darkness a reconnaissance party from the 2d Battalion proceeded to Untersie Busch where enemy artillery and mortar fire coupled with the approaching nightfall impeded observation. On this reconnaissance, Lieutenant Richard A. Hawley, executive officer of Company F, and Sergeant Otto H. Fikejs, the company's communication sergeant, were both wounded. The party returned to Perl and Lieutenant George Desmaris, Weapons Platoon leader of Company F, accurately summed up the result of endeavor at the company command post: "We couldn't see a thing. We couldn't see a *goddam* thing!"



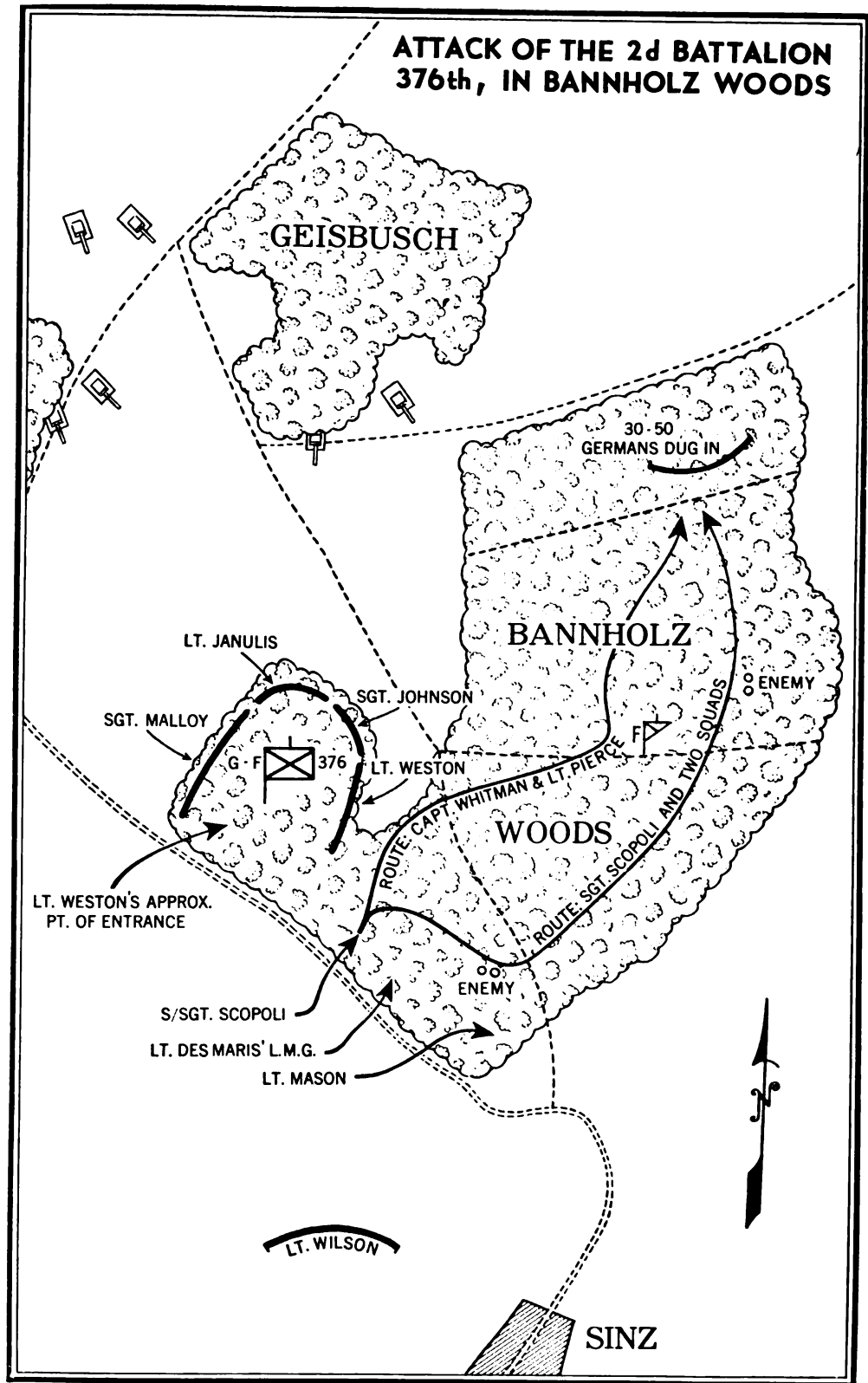
*An American mortar position outside Nennig. The three dead soldiers in the background are Germans.*

To handle the German tanks that infested Bannholz Woods, additional bazooka teams, drawn from the regimental Antitank Company, were attached to each of the assault companies. Also, Captain Blakely and Captain William C. Jones of the 919th Field Artillery Battalion were to go along as forward observers. The artillery preparation preceding the attack was to be of fifteen minutes' duration beginning at 0650 hours.

On the morning of the 10th at about 0100 hours, the 2d Battalion, 376th, detrucked in the streets of Nennig. Squads and platoons fell into line and the column moved east along the Sinz-Bubingen road. There was still no sign of dawn as the companies gathered along the southern edge of Untersie Busch. From there, the troops moved silently to the line of departure through a minefield in which the engineers had cleared and marked paths.

At H-hour, Company G moved off promptly but Company F was delayed about five minutes in locating the bazooka teams assigned to the assault platoons. Captain Heath's men advanced with the 2d Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Adolph A. Janulis, and the 3d Platoon under Technical Sergeant William Johnston, in the assault.

# ATTACK OF THE 2d BATTALION 376th, IN BANNHOLZ WOODS





As darkness faded these platoons made their way into the southern portion of Bannholz Woods. There they encountered small-arms fire, but continued to advance by employing marching fire. When Sergeant Johnston was wounded, Staff Sergeant Henry Johnson assumed command of the 3d Platoon. After driving back the enemy outpost, the platoons dug positions in the western part of the woods.

At 0800 hours, Lieutenant Janulis radioed the company commander that he was worried about his exposed flank. Staff Sergeant William B. Malloy, commanding the 1st Platoon, was therefore instructed to move his men into the woods immediately to take positions on the left of the 2d Platoon. It was now full daylight and tanks could be seen in Geisbusch Woods. Machine-gun fire periodically raked the area southwest of Bannholz.

Company F moved out with Lieutenant Gordon A. Weston's 2d Platoon on the left and Lieutenant Stanley C. Mason's 3d Platoon on the right. The former platoon was initially slowed by the heavy, tangled undergrowth through which it advanced. This platoon was responsible for contact with Company G on the left and in endeavoring to keep in touch with Captain Heath's men, veered to the west. As a result, they entered the woods in Company G's zone.

When Lieutenant Mason's platoon was about one hundred yards from Bannholz, an enemy machine gun opened fire. Fearing to be caught in the open the infantrymen sprinted for the woods. Technical Sergeant Mariano Scopoli and two squads of the 3d Platoon entered the woods left of the platoon leader and the remaining squad. Contact was immediately lost as artillery and mortar fire began to descend on Bannholz.

For Company F the attack developed badly, Lieutenant Weston's platoon was with Company G, in the western section of the woods; Lieutenant Mason's platoon was split and out of contact; the support platoon under Lieutenant George B. Wilson was caught in the open south of Bannholz suffering casualties. Two enemy tanks which had been concealed in the southeast corner of the woods added the fire of their 88s to the tree bursts already raining upon the company. As these tanks went into action, Lieutenant Mason and the bazooka teams which were with him moved forward to engage the enemy armor.

Private First Class Leonard L. Neff, one of the bazooka men, and his loader, Private First Class Otis L. King, picked a Tiger as their first target and inched their way toward the squat nose of the huge tank. Overhead, the blast of the tank's turret gun was instantly echoed

by the crash of the exploding shell. Private First Class Neff rose to his elbows and fired his first round. Smoke wreathed the Tiger as the bazookaman nervously reloaded. Again and again they fired at the Tiger and another tank supporting it. Finally the panzers, undamaged by many bazooka hits, decided to withdraw. Just at that time a mortar round landed practically on top of the bazooka team. Private First Class King bent over Neff and saw that there was little he could do for the mortally wounded man. Refusing to leave his comrade, he picked up the bazooka and continued firing at the retreating tanks until his friend died. Dismayed at the failure of the bazookas, Lieutenant Mason opened fire with his carbine to keep the tanks buttoned up. He succeeded in accomplishing this until seriously wounded by a close burst from the panzers' guns.

One of the retreating tanks maneuvered around the corner of the woods and engaged the 1st Platoon which was still halted in the open ground between the line of departure and Bannholz. The heavy machine-gun platoon, the 60mm mortar section, most of the command group and two litter teams were with the platoon. All of these groups suffered heavily from enemy mortar fire and from the tanks.

Captain Whitman, his radio operator and a runner had entered the woods at 0745, despite the intensity of the mortar fire through which they made their way. Thirty minutes later, they located Technical Sergeant Scopoli and the two squads of Lieutenant Mason's platoon that had entered the woods with him. The CO ordered this group to sweep through the woods to the north, along the eastern edge of Bannholz. As the group moved out to accomplish this mission, the enemy artillery fire slackened.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Malloy of Company G prepared to move into Bannholz and take over the western edge of Company G's zone. The platoon moved forward in defilade from the fire of the tanks in Geisbusch until suddenly bursts of machine-gun cross-fire began beating the ground around them. As the platoon hit the dirt, Sergeant Malloy yelled for his men to run for the woods. Part of the platoon followed the sergeant, but others hugged the ground and were hit where they lay. In the woods, the remnants of the platoon assembled. Only seventeen of the forty men were left. Sergeant Malloy deployed them along the western edge of the woods, where they quickly dug in. By 1000 hours when Captain Heath arrived the men were well entrenched. Lieutenant Weston had joined Company G after losing contact with his own unit and was placed on the right flank.

Captain Blakely of the 919th and his radio operator, Technician Fourth Grade Adolph Singer, entered Bannholz on their own and set up among the 2d and 3d Platoons of Company G. From this position, there was observation to the north and west. Shortly after the arrival of the artillerymen, a tank appeared on the outer edge of Geisbusch Woods. It was presently joined by a second panzer and artillery fire was adjusted on both. HE shells bursting around the tanks kept them buttoned up, but could not knock them out. They repeatedly pulled back into the woods, changed position and reappeared. When the bazooka teams attempted to hit the enemy armor with long-range fire, the characteristic blast of the weapons revealed their positions and brought speedy return fire from the panzers.

After Sergeant Scopoli and the two squads of the 3d Platoon of Company F moved out, Captain Whitman took stock of the situation. He was out of contact with Lieutenants Wilson, Mason and Weston. In addition, he did not know the whereabouts of most of his bazooka teams. He reasoned that Lieutenant Weston had pushed forward in the left of the company zone, and, with this in mind, decided to move to the site he had selected for a company CP. There he encountered Lieutenant Robert C. Pierce, the platoon leader of the heavy machine guns attached to his company. Convinced that Lieutenant Weston was on or near the company objective, the CO of Company F and Lieutenant Pierce moved northeast almost parallel to the course of Sergeant Scopoli, who was advancing on the right. As the company commander and his group approached the northeastern edge of Bannholz they encountered Sergeant Scopoli's party. Tanks had been heard to the east and the men were busily engaged in digging positions. Sergeant Scopoli reported that he had seen nothing of Lieutenant Weston in his advance. Captain Whitman then ordered the group forward again, still convinced the 2d Platoon was farther to the north. As the two squads of the 3d Platoon moved across the trail that paralleled the northern edge of Bannholz about 150 yards south of it, they encountered German infantry in well prepared positions. The enemy was armed with BARs and M1s which they employed with telling effect. Sergeant Scopoli's men returned this fire, but it soon developed that the enemy was too strong for this small group. They pulled back slowly covering their own withdrawal.

Prior to this encounter Captain Whitman, Lieutenant Pierce and the small command group had started back to Company G where they arrived at 1000 hours. En route the party ran into German mortar fire. All were wounded. At the CP Captain Whitman learned the where-

abouts of Lieutenant Weston and ordered him forward at once to reinforce Sergeant Scopoli's men. As the 2d Platoon moved out, it encountered the remnants of the two squads of the 3d Platoon filtering back through the woods. In addition to the enemy infantry, a German tank had appeared and added its fire power to the encounter.

Captain Whitman next moved Lieutenant Weston's platoon to the right, into what was properly the zone of Company F. There was still no word from Lieutenants Mason or Wilson. The number of men available to the company commander at this time did not exceed forty, and many of these were wounded.

The battalion commander had followed the progress of this attack as closely as possible, and the first few, scattered reports coming out of Bannholz had been favorable. At 0800 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Martin had seen three tanks along the edge of Geisbusch. He also observed the tanks at the southeast edge of Bannholz that had so effectively split the attack of his right assault company. From then on, the news was bad.

At about 1000 hours, one of the tank destroyers of the 704th TD Battalion went into action from Untersie Busch but scored no hits on the enemy armor south of Bannholz. A short time later, the TD men bore-sighted their 76mm and got a glancing hit which caused the enemy to move about one hundred yards east to a hull-defilade position. Throughout this fight, the TDs experienced difficulty in maneuvering because of the soft ground in which they quickly bogged.

After the first two hours radio contact between battalion and the troops in the woods failed completely. Five times the battalion communications officer, Lieutenant James C. McCullough, Jr., attempted to get wire crews into Bannholz from Untersie Busch. None of these teams was able to move more than two hundred yards from the woods before enemy fire pinned them down, inflicting casualties. As the morning progressed, it became necessary to rely more and more on information gleaned from the wounded filtering back from Bannholz.

By 0930 hours, medical evacuation had become an acute problem. Lieutenant Perry Heidelberger, MAC, with the 2d Battalion, learned that both the assault companies had lost two of their aid men before they entered the woods. Realizing there were many wounded in Bannholz and that help would be needed in caring for them, Lieutenant Heidelberger jeeped into Sinz and made his way on foot to a point about three hundred yards from the German tanks in position southeast of the woods. From there he signaled the panzers by waving



*A knocked-out German Mark IV tank with part of its bazooka skirt still in place*

his helmet, which was emblazoned with a red cross. A tense moment followed. Then, a black-uniformed officer waved him forward. In broken English the tank officer granted permission for the lieutenant to proceed into the woods, on the understanding that he would bring out German wounded along with the Americans.

Lieutenant Heidelberger agreed. Once in the woods, cries of "Hey, Doc!" quickly led him to the wounded. As he went to work, German tanks began firing into the woods in his vicinity and one of the wounded was further injured by a falling tree which was knocked down by an 88. As soon as the fire slackened the lieutenant went to work in earnest, administering to the American wounded and five German walking wounded in the immediate area. When first-aid treatment was completed, the MAC led his patients out of the woods; the German tank officer expressed satisfaction with the deal. However, before the group could start back toward Sinz, it was pinned down by the fire of an American TD which was attempting to knock out the German armor. When this firing subsided, the group proceeded into town. En route it was occasionally delayed by mortar fire, but suffered no further casualties.

In the area held by Company G things were far from good. The assault platoons had dug positions along the northern edge of the woods in their zone, where their foxholes proved scant protection against the tree bursts that continually pounded the area. Supporting artillery fire kept the tanks at bay but failed to knock them out, while

long-range bazooka fire merely increased the accuracy of the return fire delivered by the enemy tankers.

Later it was learned that the German tanks had been equipped with "bazooka skirts" which consisted of a thin outer sheet of metal plate guarding the vital spots on the hull. This outer skin was separated from the hull itself by an area of dead space. Bazooka rounds would penetrate the skirt and explode harmlessly on the hull without penetrating to the tank's interior.

By noon all hope of accomplishing the assigned mission in Bannholz Woods had been abandoned and the fight developed into a struggle for survival. Radios had been destroyed by enemy fire or had ceased to function, and most of the communication personnel were casualties. As the day progressed, contact between platoon leaders and their company commanders became almost nonexistent for it was impossible for patrols to move from one isolated group to another. To the troops it was a day of terror. There seemed to be no defense against the German armor which roamed the area at will. Inside the woods, attackers and defenders sniped at each other from trees only a few yards apart. Prisoners were taken and then lost again as captor and captured, taking cover from the furious shelling, lost each other in the confusion. The German tanks soon became aware that their bazooka skirts adequately protected them from the American bazooka fire. With this they became bolder. They left the shelter of Geisbusch Woods and sallied to within seventy-five yards of Company G's position. Their machine guns raked the trees and they fired their 88s directly into the company area.

Doggedly Captain Blakely clung to his position in the edge of the woods in Company G's zone. At his direction the 919th and 284th Field Artillery Battalions fired almost continuously. Fire from the 390th Field Artillery's 155s was also brought to bear, but the enemy tanks were cautious enough to keep moving constantly. During the afternoon, Captain Blakely estimated conservatively that there were twelve German tanks maneuvering in front and on the flanks of his position. White phosphorus shells were employed from time to time and with these two panzers were damaged. Both of them moved to the rear trailing smoke.

In the afternoon rain began to fall steadily. Untersie Busch was soon a quagmire and it became absolutely impossible for the TDs to find firm standing. One of the vehicles of the 704th fired from the asphalt road south of the woods against the tanks near Geisbusch but without result. Another TD in Sinz was worked into position to engage the

tanks southeast of Bannholz. After several rounds one enemy tank was hit and thereupon the other withdrew.

Within the woods, Captains Heath and Whitman discussed their situation as they crouched in a mud hole. Casualties had been extremely heavy, the bazooka ammunition was almost expended and the tanks were becoming bolder by the minute. To the right, German infantry was infiltrating the position. The only contact with battalion was by way of Captain Blakely's SCR-600 and over it at 1330 hours, Captain Whitman requested smoke to cover a withdrawal. This was refused; the captain was informed that reinforcements were coming. As the afternoon wore on, the situation became worse. Lieutenant Edward G. Litka, Weapons Platoon leader of Company G, volunteered to return to the battalion command post to emphasize the seriousness of the situation. Shortly after he left the woods he was wounded and crawled back into Bannholz. Eventually he made his way into Untersie Busch.

At 1530 hours, Captain Whitman again radioed battalion on the seriousness of the situation. Tank activity had increased. At least ten tanks were engaging the company from the high ground to the north. Moreover, the enemy had accurately zeroed 120mm mortars on the area. A second time, the captain was informed that reinforcements were on the way.

Meanwhile in Bannholz, the threat of a counterattack increased. Enemy tanks were within twenty-five yards of the edge of the woods. With perfect impunity, the panzers lumbered up and down the road that bordered the woods searching for occupied foxholes. At these they would blast away with direct fire from their 88s. Private Bernard F. Moan became so enraged at this slaughter, he seized the one machine gun remaining in Company G and, selecting a tank that was approaching the woods for a strafing run, blazed away at it. Surprised, the tank halted, buttoned up and then withdrew.

At 1615 hours, Captain Whitman informed Captain Heath he was going back to meet Company E which was moving forward to reinforce the position. Captain Whitman had been wounded more than seven hours earlier and was now scarcely able to walk. The remainder of Company F was therefore attached to Captain Heath's command. About this time, Sergeant Manuel M. Delagoes of the 1st Platoon arrived bringing a wire from Untersie Busch. This was the first contact the CO had with any member of this platoon all day. From the sergeant he learned how the platoon and the bazooka teams attached to it had been trapped in the open. The NCO related that some of



the group managed to work their way back to the protection of a crest to their rear, but the rest of the platoon and the bazooka teams were either killed or wounded with the coming of full daylight.

By telephone Captain Whitman made arrangements to meet Captain Darrah and informed Major Dossenbach, the battalion executive officer, of the exact situation in the woods.

As Captain Whitman made his way to the rear, the enemy counter-attacked with tanks and infantry from the north. Company G's forward positions were overrun and Sergeant Malloy, on the left flank, could see enemy infantry massing in the woods to his front. As Captain Whitman and Sergeant Scopoli hobbled to the rear, some of the American infantry falling back through the woods passed them. Resistance was beginning to crumble.

At 1655 hours Company E, led by the battalion commander, was en route from Untersie Busch through the draw to Bannholz when it met the remnants of Companies F and G filtering back. It was a pitifully small group to be called two companies. Many of the men had lost their weapons and equipment. They were all mud-covered, stunned, hollow-eyed and exhausted after hours in a hell of flying steel, impotent against the repeated close-in attacks of the German armor.

Further advance by Company E was halted, for the withdrawal from the woods necessitated a quick change in plans. By 1745 hours a new line had been established by Companies E and H north of the Sinz-Bubingen road in Untersie Busch Woods. The plan for taking Bannholz was abandoned and Companies F and G moved into Wies to reorganize.

The attack had proved a costly failure. In Company F, of the two platoons and the light-machine-gun section that managed to get into Bannholz, only thirty-five effectives remained. Lieutenant George Desmaris and Lieutenant Wilson had been killed. Captain Whitman and Lieutenants Hawley and Mason had been seriously wounded. Company G also suffered heavily. Of the 124 men that entered the attack, only seventy-eight returned to Untersie Busch.

At 1147 hours on the morning of this unsuccessful attack on Bannholz Woods, Companies I and K of the 301st moved forward as planned, to protect the left flank of Lieutenant Colonel Martin's battalion from counterattack. Only light resistance was encountered during the advance and, without difficulty, Captain William C. Warren's company placed a roadblock across the trail that led from Adenholz Woods to Bannholz. Antitank mines were also emplaced and the



*Before making a fast dash to the rear, medics strap a casualty to the litter rack of their jeep*

companies dug positions. From Adenholz the 3d Battalion, 301st, could see little of the fighting in Bannholz Woods. At various times infantry was observed moving out of the woods to the north, but it was impossible to determine if they were American or German. Later, when Lieutenant Colonel Martin's men were driven out of Bannholz, the 3d Battalion, 301st, was ordered to withdraw from Adenholz Woods. Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's men continued to hold the northern tip of Adenholz and to man their roadblock until early on the morning of the 11th when they slowly withdrew from their exposed positions. The same day, the 3d Battalion, 376th, relieved the 3d Battalion, 301st, and Companies E and H of the 376th were attached to the relieving battalion in conjunction with the relief of Colonel Hagerty's regiment by the 376th Infantry.

Colonel McClune had set up his regimental command post in Besch the previous night with a forward CP in Wies. Under cover of darkness on the 11th, the 1st Battalion, 376th, moved into Sinz and relieved the 2d Battalion, 301st. By the following day all elements of Colonel

Hagerty's regiment were in reserve at Veckring. Colonel McClune's men held the left flank of the Division assisted by Major Stanion's 1st Battalion, 302d, which occupied the regiment's left boundary north of Wies. Colonel Thurston's 3d Battalion of the 376th held the center of the regimental front with the 1st Battalion on their right in Sinz.

Three times the Division had attempted to take Bannholz Woods and three times the enemy had repelled the American thrusts. Each of these ventures cost dearly in men and equipment. They gained no ground for the Division, but they did further weaken the Germans' ebbing strength.

Shortly after the 301st Infantry had settled in Division reserve at Veckring, Major Samuel H. Hayes, Assistant G-3, while returning from a tour of the front lines, stopped and examined an abandoned German Mark IV in the town of Nennig. Apparently the tank was in operating condition. Personnel of the 94th Ordnance Company were sent to inspect the vehicle and found that it could be moved under its own power. It was driven back to Veckring where it was utilized as a training aid by the 301st Infantry. The problems and mistakes met and made in Bannholz Woods were critiqued at length, and experiments conducted with the tank in which all infantry weapons were used against it. In addition to the stress laid on tank training, General Malony held a conference on the 14th of February which was attended by the three regimental commanders; Lieutenant Colonel Bidwell, CO of the 704th TD Battalion; and some of his company commanders. Infantry-TD coordination was discussed and the need for a better understanding of the basic principles underlying the employment of each arm was made clear.

## *Chapter 25: PILLBOXES 151, 152, 153*

**F**AILURE OF THE 2d Battalion, 376th, to hold Bannholz Woods called for a modification of the basic plan set forth in Division Field Order No. 10. The CG estimated that since the bulk of the fighting had been on the Division left and center, many German units had been shifted to that side of the line from the east. Moreover, it was apparent that Corps would soon release the 94th for use as a unit against the Siegfried Switch. The time was now ripe for an attack against the group of pillboxes and bunkers east of Campholz Woods, which formed the strongest part of the well sited enemy line of defensive positions, for in all likelihood the garrisons of these fortifications had been considerably weakened to reinforce the German right. This last limited-objective was assigned to the 302d whose 2d Battalion was to attack the morning of the 15th.

Between the 9th and the 14th of February, the activities of the 302d in Campholz Woods had been confined to minor skirmishes brought on by patrol activity, and holding the woods itself. Company B of the 319th Engineers destroyed the pillboxes west of Campholz which the 2d Battalion, 302d, had taken, by detonating 1,000-lb. charges inside the concrete structures.

During this period the enemy continued to deluge Campholz with perfectly adjusted artillery and mortar fire; mines and booby traps which were thickly strewn throughout the area inflicted occasional casualties. The weather remained cold and wet. Mud in the woods was knee-deep in places and holding the position was a dirty, dangerous task.

On February 9, the 5th Ranger Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard P. Sullivan, was attached to the Division for use in a defensive mission. The same day this battalion was placed under Colonel Johnson's control and relieved the 1st and 3d Battalions, 302d, assuming responsibility for approximately ten thousand yards of frontage on the right flank of the Division. To deceive the enemy as to the strength of force holding this extended position, Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan immediately began active patrolling, harassing the enemy positions to his front.

Upon being relieved by the Rangers, the 3d Battalion, 302d was placed in regimental reserve and the 1st Battalion reverted to Division reserve. The following day, February 10, 1945, the latter battalion was attached to the 301st Infantry and moved to Apach. On the 11th, Company F of the 302d was relieved in the Tettingen-Butzdorf area and moved to some farm houses in the vicinity of Borg. The following day the 3d Battalion, 302d, relieved the remainder of the 2d Battalion



*Sandtable model of the Campholz Woods–Oberleuken area*

in Campholz Woods and Major Maixner laid plans for the reduction of the pillbox area to the east and northeast of Campholz Woods.

A sandtable model of the pillboxes was constructed at the command post in Borg, and on this the officers and noncommissioned officers of the battalion were oriented as to the terrain and known enemy defenses. Dominating the area were three cupola-type pillboxes capped by revolving steel turrets. These were numbered 151, 152 and 153; G-2 information indicated that the German battalion commander in this sector had his headquarters in the last box. To complete the terrain study, company officers were flown over the pillbox area in artillery liaison planes.

Major Maixner and his executive officer, Captain Hodges, decided to use Companies E and F in the coming attack. Company F was to thrust forward from the northeast edge of Campholz Woods to seize the high ground in the vicinity of pillbox 151 and to reduce boxes 151, 153, and the three smaller emplacements to the south. Two platoons of Company E were to drive directly east from the woods, taking pillbox 152 and the four positions farther to the east and south. The remaining platoon of Company E, under Lieutenant Oliver K. Smith, was to move northeast from Borg and seize pillbox 94. Company H was to furnish close-fire support from the woods with Lieutenant

Joseph F. Cody's HMG platoon backing Company E's assault. Diversionary attacks were to be launched by the 376th to the west and the 5th Ranger Battalion to the east; during the attack, the 3d Battalion, 302d, was to continue holding Campholz Woods. The 301st Field Artillery and Company C of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion were to support the operation. H-hour was designated for 0600 hours on the 15th.

At midnight on the 14th, Company F moved by truck to Borg; from there Captain Kops' men marched into Campholz Woods. By 0300 hours they were in their forward assembly area. Companies E and H had followed Company F. Just prior to H-hour, the silence and darkness were shattered. To the east there was mortar fire and to the west heavy artillery fell. Obviously, the demonstrations that were to be launched by the flank units had jumped the gun. In the dozen-or-so minutes that remained before the men were to leave the shelter of Campholz Woods, the assault groups under Lieutenant Alvarado huddled in the communication trenches that were their line of departure. Many of the men were reinforcements who had just recently joined the battalion. As they waited for the order to move forward, an intense German mortar and artillery concentration hit the eastern edge of Campholz. At the same time, heavy machine-gun fire poured into the woods from their front. Under this unnerving fire, many of the new men scattered into the woods and among the tributaries of the communication trenches. The unit was thoroughly disorganized and because of this intense fire, which continued throughout the day causing many wound and concussion casualties, it was midafternoon before the company was able to reorganize and push out of the woods toward its objective. Later it was learned from a captured German artilleryman that the enemy's fire plan for Campholz Woods called for six box concentrations. These covered the northeastern and northwestern portions of the woods. They were fired on the least noise or suspicion of American movement.

Company E met with much better success. Just prior to daylight, the 3d Platoon moved east and took the occupants of pillbox 152 by complete surprise. A phosphorus grenade was thrown into the box and this set fire to some ammunition. Quickly the defenders capitulated and twenty-five prisoners were taken. Lieutenant Butler's men, who had been following the 3d Platoon, moved forward rapidly and seized their objectives with little trouble, following which, Lieutenant Smith's platoon reduced pillbox 94. At 0730 hours, Colonel Johnson was



*While Private First Class David McMahon looks on, Lieutenant Leland A. Meyer of the 301st Field Artillery calls for fire on a pillbox east of Campholz Woods*

notified that Company E was on all its objectives. Two pillboxes and four bunkers had been won from the enemy.

The company CP was established in 152 and Lieutenant Lewies sent one of his squads to the 1st Platoon to assist Lieutenant Butler's men in garrisoning the pillboxes and bunkers they had captured. Unfortunately, the telephone wire that was laid as the troops advanced refused to work and the radio would neither send nor receive. While the company had obtained its objectives with relatively few casualties, its situation was far from enviable for the high ground and the pillboxes to the north dominated the position.

In the woods, Company H, supporting the attack, was also heavily pounded by the German defensive barrages. Lieutenant Cody, commanding the HMGs assisting Company E, moved among his men despite the intensity of the fire and repeatedly reassured the platoon by his coolness. Lieutenant John D. Anderson, commanding Company E, and Lieutenant L. A. Meyer of the artillery, brought new radio batteries with them from Borg and ran the gantlet of fire to the CP in 152.

About mid-afternoon the assault group of Company F was able to



leave the woods. They slowly worked their way along a series of communication trenches to a point southeast of 151. From here they met with nothing but failure. There was no cover and both 151 and 153 were alerted for an American attack following the reduction of 152 and its supporting installations to the south. Lieutenant Alvarado's men managed to direct bazooka fire against 153 but this ricocheted harmlessly off the pillbox. Tank destroyer support that had been expected did not materialize and the enemy constantly swept the precarious positions in the communication trench with fire. Late in the afternoon, word was received that battalion was preparing a night attack. As best they could, the men dug positions in the eighteen-inch deep communication trench and waited for nightfall. About 2000 hours enemy tanks were heard to the front. As the panzers moved in the assault group pulled back to the woods. En route, Lieutenant Charles P. Davis was wounded and lost in the darkness.

At the same time, Company E became aware of the enemy armor. Thirty minutes later this unit informed battalion that the panzers were directly in front of the company position. Lieutenant Meyer requested artillery support as Company E's only antitank defense was one flame thrower and some *Panzerfausts* which no one knew how to operate. The 301st Field Artillery replied promptly and accurately with fire which drove the tanks back.

The bunkers taken by Company E had formerly been held by the 2d Company of the 713th Grenadier Regiment and the commanding officer of that unit was made personally responsible for regaining these positions. Shortly after midnight on the 16th, following a short mortar and artillery barrage, the Germans attacked. Using a small draw as an avenue of approach, approximately one hundred infantry supported by ten tanks and self-propelled guns, moved south along the east side of the Borg-Kirf road. When abreast of Company E's position they turned west and launched their assault against Lieutenant Butler's position. At the time the attack struck, Lieutenant Butler was at the company command post in 152.

Moving up to the bunkers and pillboxes, the armored vehicles employed their 88s with telling effect. As flares lit the scene, from 152 enemy armor could be seen roaming the entire area. Frantically, Lieutenant Meyer called for artillery fire upon and around the command post. To the east Lieutenant Smith withdrew his men from the bunker they were holding. Subsequently he was ordered to reoccupy this position and did so.

Private First Class Wayne N. Woolman managed to load one of

the *Panzerfausts* and with it in his hand, he dashed into the open to fire at a German tank between Pillboxes 152 and 10, scoring a hit which knocked out the vehicle. Technical Sergeant Tommy Nettles and the men with him in one of the captured bunkers were forced to surrender when the muzzle of an 88 was thrust directly into the bunker they were occupying.

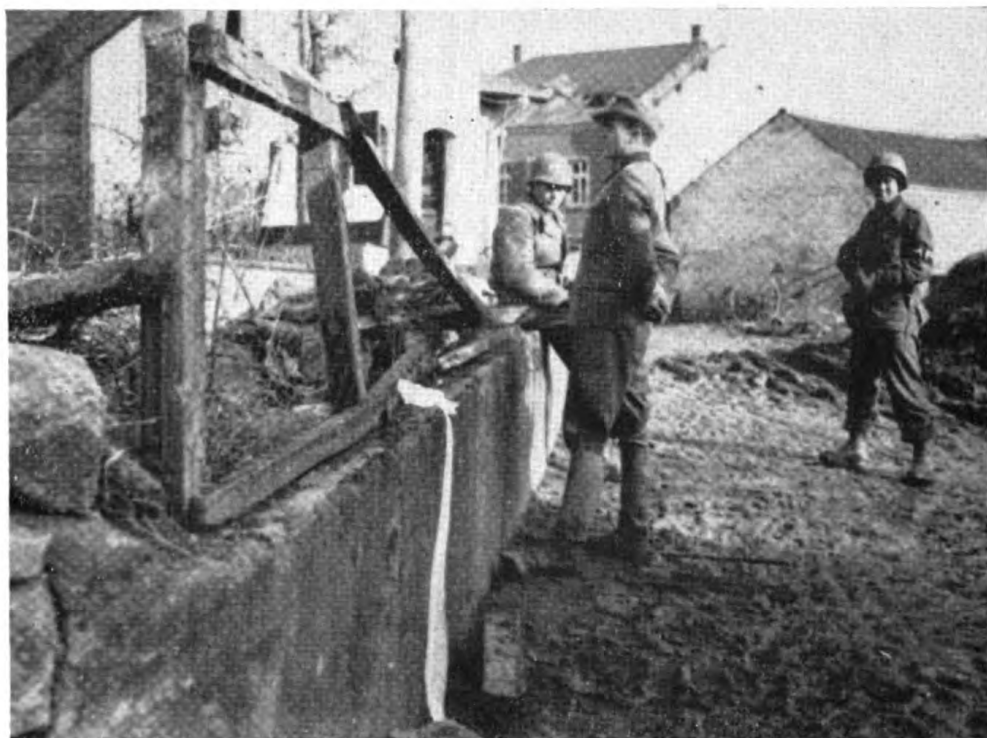
To the east of the German attack, on the outskirts of Oberleuken, Lieutenant Joseph P. Castor, III, of Company G, had been maintaining a listening post to warn of any enemy attack coming from the direction of Kirf. This outpost early heard and reported the movement of the German tanks and a patrol dispatched from this point provided the artillery with exact information regarding the panzers. Protective bar-rages laid by the 301st Field Artillery proved particularly effective. Several self-propelled guns were knocked out and heavy casualties were inflicted on the attacking infantry. But, despite this support the German attack retook one small pillbox and three bunkers that had been seized by Lieutenant Butler's men the previous morning.

About 0200 hours, the enemy tanks and infantry attacked a second time. Artillery was fired around pillbox 152 and the men of Company E employed every weapon they could muster. After a fierce encounter the Germans were driven back with heavy losses.

Inside 152 there remained only eleven effectives after this second attack. There had been no word or sign of reinforcement. Lieutenant Anderson informed battalion that he was going to evacuate the position and withdraw to the woods. Shortly thereafter, carrying their five wounded with them, these men of Company E made their way back to Campholz Woods.

Lieutenant Alvarado and the officers of Company F had with some difficulty reassembled the company and taken positions in the northern part of Campholz Woods. Technical Sergeant Howard J. Morten of the 2d Platoon and Technician Fourth Grade Oscar E. Summerford, a medic, searched the edge of the woods, in the inky blackness, for Lieutenant Davis. They finally found the wounded officer and assisted him to the aid station.

During the early morning hours, Staff Sergeant William R. Moon led a patrol from Lieutenant Castor's listening post to destroy a 120mm mortar position that had been particularly bothersome. The enemy's habit of leaving their mortars unguarded while they took shelter in their pillboxes and bunkers worked in the patrol's favor. They slipped up to the installation in question, destroying the mortar without interference from its crew. On its way back to the listening post, the



*A captured Nazi officer under guard at Borg awaits interrogation*

patrol encountered and took prisoner an enemy mine-laying party of three men.

Fearing the enemy might again counterattack and push to the south toward Borg, Major Maixner ordered Company F from the woods at 0400 hours. The company moved to the east, slightly south of the pillbox area, and dug positions between this area and Borg. For the same reason, tank destroyers of the 704th TD Battalion and one of the battalion antitank guns were brought to the crossroads north of town to stop any panzer thrust from the direction of Kirf.

As a result of their attacks the Germans had retaken two pillboxes and four bunkers. To accomplish this, they sacrificed six track-laying vehicles and sustained numerous infantry casualties which they could ill afford.

On the afternoon of the 14th, the weather began to clear. Since the 29th of January with only two exceptions, there had been rain or snow every day and the cloudy, overcast skies had severely limited aerial reconnaissance and support. But, the morning of the 15th dawned cold and bright. Four squadrons of P-47s from the XIX Tactical Air Command took to the air and unloaded twenty-four tons of white phosphorus and high-explosive bombs on Beuren, Das Lee Woods, Bann-

holz Woods, Kirf, and the woods east of Kreuzweiler. Following this they strafed Kreuzweiler, Dilmar, Orsholz and Bannholz Woods. Two enemy tanks were damaged, and fires started in Kreuzweiler, Beuren and Kirf. Das Lee Woods and Oberleuken were bombed on the 16th and 17th and in addition, on the latter day Kirf, Munzingen, Moschholz Woods and Der Langen Woods were strafed.

To summarize, during the period from January 7, 1945, when the Division took over positions in the Triangle, to February 15, 1945, the men of the 94th had practically destroyed the 416th Infantry Division, reduced the infantry and tank strength of the 11th Panzer Division by one-half, prevented the disengagement of sizable portions of enemy armor for employment elsewhere, and compelled the diversion of badly needed German infantry replacements to the Siegfried Switch. All arms and services of the 94th contributed to these results. In particular, as was consistently revealed by PW statements, the artillery had proved itself a tremendously effective supporting weapon.

## *Chapter 26: SHOOT THE WORKS!*

ON FEBRUARY 15, while the 2d Battalion, 302d, was fighting in and east of Campholz Woods, the CG of XX Corps visited the battalion command post in Borg. While there, General Walker informed General Malony, who was also present, that all restrictions as to the force the Division might commit had been lifted. The CG of the 94th was free to "shoot the works." For the first time since arriving in Third Army, General Malony had the entire combat strength of the Division free for offensive operations.

That night at Sierck the Division Commander called the Chief of Staff, Colonel Bergquist, and his G-3 into conference. Previously they had discussed the general form of a coordinated division attack—the logical culmination of the attrition policy. Now the time had come to make the minor changes necessary to fit the overall plan to the existing situation and to prepare a directive for the General Staff sections, based upon which the latter would draw coordinated orders.

Confronting the Division at this time were the remnants of the 416th Infantry Division and the 256th Volksgrenadier Division. There had been no contact with the 11th Panzer Division since the 9th of February and higher headquarters insisted it was no longer in the Triangle. Major Carl S. Schofield, who had taken over as G-2 when Colonel Love was wounded at Butzdorf, maintained that since the 11th had not been identified elsewhere, it might still be right behind the Switch Line and the possibility of its commitment against the 94th must be considered.

The plan of attack, when completely developed and produced as Field Order No. 11, dated February 16, 1945, called for a coordinated Division attack, three regiments abreast, on a relatively narrow front at 0400 hours on the morning of the 19th. To accomplish the massing of forces, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop with the Defense Platoon of the Division Headquarters Company and a platoon of the 465th AAA Battalion attached, was to relieve the 2d Battalion, 376th, on the Division's west flank in front of Thorn and Kreuzweiler. The 5th Ranger Battalion was to be responsible for that portion of the front extending from Borg east to Nohn.

The 301st Infantry, which was in Division reserve, was to make the main effort. It was to drive east from Sinz, Butzdorf and Tettingen, storm the heights of Munzingen Ridge and sweep on to seize Faha and Munzingen. The 302d Infantry was to push from Campholz Woods, reducing the pillbox area to the east between the woods and Oberleuken. Colonel Johnson's men would then continue east and settle accounts with the enemy in Orsholz. Bannholz Woods was to be taken by the 376th Infantry. The regiment would then drive eastward up





*An infantry cannon company in position and on call*

Munzingen Ridge to seize Der Langen Woods southwest of Kirf. Throughout this operation, Colonel McClune's men were to protect the left or north flank of the Division during the coordinated drive to the east. The 376th was to motorize one battalion and place it in regimental reserve to be committed only on Division order. This was to be the all-out effort to penetrate and roll up the Switch Line.

While the infantry attack was being planned at Sierck, far to the rear Brigadier General Julius E. Slack, the CG of XX Corps Artillery; General Fortier, the Division Artillery Commander; and their staffs were formulating a fire-support plan. An arbitrary line, approximately five thousand yards in advance of the Division front, was drawn on the map. Corps artillery undertook to engage all targets beyond this line while Division artillery was to fire on targets short of it. It was directed that in the interest of preserving the element of surprise, no firing should be done prior to H-hour. Initially, Corps' fire was to be placed on all known enemy command posts, to disrupt hostile communications and command. After fifteen minutes of such fire, hostile battery positions were to be engaged for thirty minutes with a maximum volume of fire. Thereafter, neutralization of enemy battery positions was to be continued for another hour. For the next ten hours fire was to be placed on main routes of approach to the battle area. These last eleven hours of fire were planned with sufficient elasticity to provide on-call fire for targets of opportunity.

That portion of the fire plan calling for ten hours of fire on probable routes of enemy approach was in the nature of an experiment. Due to the fact that the attack was to be delivered into a corridor less than ten miles wide, between the Saar and Moselle Rivers, it seemed practical to attempt the isolation of the battlefield by interdiction fire placed at focal points on all roads leading into the enemy's main battle position. The bulk of this fire was to be delivered on towns and road intersections. It was felt that if this fire could be maintained for a sufficient length of time the enemy would not only be prevented from reinforcing and resupplying his front-line positions, but in the event of a general retreat would be forced to abandon the majority of his wheeled vehicles and heavy weapons.

The fire plan within the Division, based on the hard-won experience of the preceding weeks of fighting, called for an integration of all artillery means available. For this purpose the cannon companies of the 301st and 302d were attached to Division Artillery. Organic infantry antitank guns were to fire initially as field artillery



and the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion was to be placed in an artillery general-support role. For the first thirty minutes after H-hour, all these units were to fire at the maximum sustained rate on enemy front-line positions, command posts, routes of approach, assembly areas, mortar and machine-gun positions and known strongpoints. Continued neutralization of the more critical of these targets was to be provided, subject to interruption in favor of on-call fires requested by forward observers or from ground or air observation posts.

All infantry units were instructed to increase their patrol activity. Reconnaissance was pushed to the utmost, to gain maximum information concerning enemy defenses. Nightly two and three-man patrols moved out along the entire front probing the enemy line. In particular, information was vitally needed on enemy strength in Bannholz Woods and on the presence of enemy armor in the Triangle. The pillbox area east of Campholz Woods, assigned to the 302d, and the Bannholz-Adenholz Woods area, assigned to the 376th, had already been thoroughly explored in previous attacks. But Munzingen Ridge, assigned to the 301st, had never been investigated. As this was the objective of the main thrust, it was most important that intelligence as to German strength and installations in this region be gathered quickly. The 1st and 3d Battalions, 301st, which had been assigned the initial objectives, patrolled east from Sinz and Butzdorf aggressively. They made a thorough search of the approaches to the ridge, accurately locating many of the enemy's minefields, barbed-wire entanglements and outpost positions. One patrol penetrated to Das Lee Woods atop the ridge. Working their way along the edge of a minefield, some fifty yards in front of the woods, the patrol members were able to chart exactly the position of a majority of the German strong points within the woods.

On the night before the attack, Sergeant Frederick J. Ramondini, of the 301st's I&R Platoon, led a small reconnaissance patrol out of Sinz. This group worked north up the draw that leads out of town to a point where they had outflanked the defenses of Das Lee Woods. Then they turned east and cautiously proceeded up Munzingen Ridge. Crawling on their bellies, they worked their way over the crest between Das Lee and Der Langen Woods. From there the patrol advanced down the far slope, across the Borg-Kirf highway and slipped into Munzingen. In town, they moved from building to building in the deeper shadows. Behind the darkened windows, German voices could be clearly heard. Once a door opened noisily and the patrol froze until the German who came from the house walked up the street away from

the I&R men. The troops then continued on their mission. Between two of the buildings loomed a huge black hulk. Farther down the street, between other buildings, were more massive shapes. The patrol had the information it sought. There were tanks in Munzingen. With this valuable information they withdrew from town and cautiously began to tread the three thousand yards back to Sinz. They returned safely with their vital knowledge.

XX Corps had been exerting strong pressure to launch the coming attack on the 18th, but on the persistent recommendations of the Division Commander the following day was designated. Time available for ground reconnaissance was used by all units to the greatest advantage. Relief maps were prepared for each headquarters down to and including battalions. Plans of every town along the Division front were secured and passed out. Patrol information was plotted on sandtables and every platoon commander had a chance to orient his men to a point where they knew exactly where they were to go and what to do. Meanwhile, there was a careful reshuffling of troops. Command posts were moved as close to the line of departure as practicable and patrolling continued. The detailed planning and exhaustive preparations instilled a spirit of confidence in all ranks. As a unit the Division was facing its greatest test. This time the Siegfried Switch Line would be breached. There would be no more opportunity for the Germans to concentrate every piece of artillery, every mortar and every tank against a small portion of the Division in the attack. This time the 94th was to show what it could do working as a unit. The so-called offensive-defense was ended.

## Chapter 27: FEBRUARY 19: INITIAL OBJECTIVES

SOON AFTER DARK on the evening of February 18, 1945, the Division rear area became a moving mass of men and equipment. All elements gravitated toward the front. By midnight the infantry units were in position to move to their forward assembly areas and the lines of departure. The artillery was poised; ready for its most important shoot to date—the now famous 15,000-round artillery preparation for a single division attack.

### 301ST INFANTRY

Making the main effort for the regiment, the 3d Battalion, 301st, left Sinz at 0200 hours and began the long climb up the ridge to its line of departure. Das Lee Woods which surmounted Munzingen Ridge was the initial objective of the battalion. Company L led the way, closely followed by Company K. En route some of the men of the leading company noticed a mortar position to their flank, and as the company spread out on the line of departure, Lieutenant John R. Fraboni asked Captain Paul E. Frierson if the battalion's mortars had moved forward during the night. Upon receiving a negative answer, the lieutenant instructed the rear platoon to investigate the situation. A surprised group of Germans was quickly rounded up.

The designated line of departure was along the military crest of the ridge. In the darkness Company L took position on the left and Company K on the right. Meanwhile, the reserve company sent one platoon to protect the battalion's flank. Silhouetted against the top of the ridge some six hundred yards to the front was Das Lee Woods, through which the enemy had set up his new defense line. The line of departure was quickly outposted and the assault companies waited for H-hour.

At 0400 hours the attack's artillery preparation crashed into Das Lee Woods and with the opening rounds the infantry began their advance up the steep slope. Firing into the darkness, the companies moved forward. Company L, upon reaching the minefield in front of the woods, discovered a cleared lane used by enemy tanks. Treading the tanks tracks they passed through safely while Company K blasted its path through this obstacle with primacord. Enemy resistance along the edge of the woods was extremely feeble. The infantry moved into Das Lee and without halting swept to its eastern edge. Units then dug positions and dispatched patrols to the rear to comb the woods thoroughly for any lurking Germans. In this manner twenty-six prisoners were rounded up. By 0730 hours, the woods had been completely searched. The assault companies established contact and consolidated

the position as enemy artillery, mortars, and rockets began to rain upon them.

The 1st Battalion, 301st, assigned to take that portion of the ridge south of Das Lee Woods, moved north out of Butzdorf in a column of companies, up the Butzdorf-Sinz road. Just south of Sinz the battalion turned east at a small draw. Company C, which had been leading, deployed north of the draw while Company B formed south of it.

As Company C moved forward to the attack at 0400 hours it encountered mines and was subjected to heavy mortar fire. Many casualties were caused particularly in the 1st Platoon; Lieutenant Walter M. Stempak, commanding the platoon, was among those wounded. Therefore, Captain Drenzek withdrew the company and circled the minefield to the north. Then the company pushed forward rapidly, fearing to be caught on the slope in full view of the enemy with the coming of daylight. Upon reaching the top of the ridge, the company commander discovered he had veered to the north in avoiding the minefield. Company C therefore swung to the right and proceeded south, sweeping the top of the ridge. As soon as it reached its assigned objective, Company C prepared defensive positions. Captain Drenzek had been wounded in coming up the slope and Lieutenant Howard Johnson assumed command. To the company's front were some trenches that had not been searched. Accompanied by Private First Class Albert Dionne, the acting company commander went forward to investigate. It was soon obvious that these trenches were occupied and that the Germans in them did not intend to surrender. Both men withdrew and mortar fire was brought to bear. As this fire lifted, the enemy troops thought better of their original decision.

Company B deployed in its zone with the 1st Platoon on the left, the 2d on the right and the 3d in reserve. At 0400 hours it moved forward with Company C. Commanded by Lieutenant Arthur A. Shocksnyder, the 2d Platoon suffered fifteen casualties in as many minutes from American mortar fire which fell short. At about the same time, the 1st Platoon encountered trouble. Staff Sergeant John R. Koellhopper of the latter unit continues the story:

Suddenly a mine went off killing the scout, and the platoon leader set two men to probing for the edge of the field. No sooner had they started than they were blown up. The explosions alerted the Krauts in a bunker not fifty yards away and their machine gun opened up at point-blank range. Men hit the ground setting off more mines as they landed. Legs and feet were blown away. Men began screaming. Others cried, "Medic! Medic!" The men were trapped. They couldn't move a hand or foot for fear of hitting a *Schü* mine.

The enemy was throwing mortars and 88s and that machine gun was adding to the hell. The lieutenant was badly wounded. One of the men who had lost both legs was crying, "Get me out of here. God! Oh God! Get me out of here!" The platoon sergeant [Technical Sergeant Henry E. Crandall] was desperately trying to make a path through the minefield. Another man trying to move set off another mine. As this man looked down at what was left of his two feet he started crying like a baby—not screaming, but crying. He didn't seem to be in pain, the shock must have been too much just then. Another Yank lay there, his bottom half a hell of a shape. All he kept doing was begging his buddy to shoot him. "Shoot me. Please shoot me. Damn it, can't you see I'm no good any more?" Still another man who was badly wounded was begging his buddy for his overcoat. "I'm cold. Damn, I'm cold! Give me your overcoat, won't you? Oh please . . . please give me your coat?" "The bastards! The dirty bastards! Won't they ever stop?" cried another voice as more and more mortar shells came pouring in. The machine gun firing from the bunker had stopped and the Krauts were shouting something in German. One Yank could understand them. They were hollering, "It hurts, doesn't it? It hurts!" The platoon sergeant had heroically blasted a path through the minefield and was leading the platoon to the far edge of the field. More men were lost by the time the platoon had cleared the field. Now they were able to get at those bunkers. But, no! As the platoon moved up on the bunkers, the Krauts quit. The objective had been reached and there were sixteen men left."

Meanwhile, the 2d Platoon on the right began the encirclement of an enemy bunker in its zone. One German was killed as he bolted from the position and the rest of the enemy decided to surrender. They moved toward the 1st Platoon to give themselves up. In doing so they ran into their own minefield. Mines were detonated and casualties caused among the prisoners.

As Staff Sergeant Robert J. Cook and Private First Class John M. Lawton approached a bunker surrounded by trenches, two Germans manning the position came out to surrender. Just then an artillery shell began its descent. The Germans immediately took cover in one of the trenches. After the shell burst, they again attempted to surrender only to have the artillery interrupt the proceedings a second time. This scene was repeated much to the annoyance of Private First Class Lawton. To convince the POWs-to-be that the artillery was not their only threat, he fired a shot in their direction. This still did not have the desired effect. The frightened enemy quickly seized their discarded weapons and returned fire. Lawton was wounded in the thumb and as he attempted to fire a second round his weapon jammed. In disgust, he threw the useless rifle at the Germans who then dropped their weapons and surrendered.

As dawn began to break, the tanks of the 778th Tank Battalion attached to the 1st Battalion moved forward along the Tettingen-Sinz

road. At Sinz they swung east and began to climb the ridge. To the rear of Company B, one of the tanks struck a mine and another bogged down attempting to bypass the stalled vehicle. By maneuvering the rest of the armor found firm standing and assisted the company in clearing the ridge.

Company A, in battalion reserve, was given the mission of clearing the pillboxes in the battalion zone south of the Sinz–Oberleuken road and of maintaining contact with the 302d Infantry on the right. To accomplish the latter task, the 1st Platoon took positions on the hill between Butzdorf and Campholz Woods. The remaining platoons of the company were organized into assault teams under Lieutenant Robert H. Wolf to carry out the company's principal mission. This force headed up the draw that led east from Butzdorf. As the platoons moved into the open, two enemy machine guns caught them in a vicious crossfire. With daylight approaching, Staff Sergeant Ichiro Matsuzawa crawled unnoticed toward the nearest machine gun, lobbed a grenade and then charged the position. Two of the machine-gun crew were killed by the grenade and the remaining three who were wounded surrendered. Then the sergeant boldly advanced against the second position capturing its defenders. Following this, the 2d Platoon pushed on and cleared the bunkers that comprised the company objective. In this operation they were supported by the 3d Platoon. Both platoons next made their way to the top of the ridge against only sporadic resistance.

### 302D INFANTRY

Shortly after midnight on the 19th, the 1st and 3d Battalions, 302d, moved from Perl and Eft, respectively, to their assembly areas in Campholz Woods. As the assault companies advanced into the woods they picked up flame throwers, pole and satchel charges, bangalore torpedoes and other demolitions from stock piles set up by the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoons. The night was extremely dark and thaws had turned the area into a quagmire.

Initial objective for the regiment was the pillbox area on the southern nose of Munzingen Ridge, east and northeast of Campholz Woods. Hence, the direction of attack was eastward. The 3d Battalion, which was assigned the left or northern flank of the attack, moved into the northeastern portion of the woods; 1st Battalion, responsible for the right of the regimental zone, took positions just south of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men. As these two battalions assumed position, the 2d Battalion, 302d, which had been holding the woods, moved back

to Eft where it became Division reserve. Holding the right flank of the Division, the 5th Ranger Battalion had requested that it be included in this attack and Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan's troops were assigned the mission of taking Oberleuken.

At 0400 hours, the assault companies of the 1st and 3d Battalions lay huddled on their line of departure at the eastern edge of the woods. Their artillery preparation on the pillbox area landed on schedule and was fierce in its intensity. Under this cover, the infantry moved forward.

As Company I left the woods, the entire scene was suddenly lit by dozens of German flares. Enemy small arms and automatic weapons raked the area and the position was deluged with mortar fire. The intensity of this fire forced the assault platoons to seek what little cover was available east of the woods. To prevent any surprise or flanking movement, the enemy continued to send up flares until daylight. To make the situation worse, the 2d Platoon encountered an enemy minefield and here casualties were inflicted. Several attempts were made by rescue parties to remove the wounded, but enemy fire drove them back. Despite this heavy fire, just before dawn, Technical Sergeant James E. Hudson managed to work his assault group through the mined area. They stormed and took the first bunker to fall to Company I's attack.

With the coming of daylight, Company B, 778th Tank Battalion, moved out of Tettingen along the road that led to the northern edge of Campholz Woods. This route had been cleared during the night by the 319th Engineers and the tanks moved to the flank of the pillbox area without incident. There the tankers were briefed as to the most troublesome pillboxes and the armor moved into the fray. They deployed and by the direct fire of their 75s soon buttoned up individual boxes. This lifted a good deal of the automatic-weapons fire, in addition to denying the observation of the Germans directing the mortar fire falling on the area.

As the tanks supporting Company I arrived, Sergeant Hudson's assault group pushed to the next bunker assisted by the fire of the armor. Under this cover, demolition charges were detonated on the apertures of the second pillbox. Lieutenant Edwards, who had assumed command of the company shortly before the attack began, left Private First Class Ernest L. Buffalini and five men to flush out the Germans manning the position while the rest of the company continued forward.

One of the most important of the pillboxes in Company I's zone was 153. From this box, enemy artillery observers had been directing



fire against the 94th ever since its arrival in the Triangle. The position was also a command post from which the activities of the German troops in the vicinity were directed and controlled by an underground telephone communication system. Within the box, a German artillery observer, Lieutenant Beikert, was making frantic efforts to get his batteries to bring additional fire on Company I as it advanced.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Edwards and Technical Sergeant Edward Cardell, taking advantage of the fire support of the tanks, advanced their assault groups for the reduction of this important pillbox. Private First Class Alvin Cohen and Private First Class Joseph J. Truss worked their way to the entrance of 153 and there Truss rigged a demolition charge which blew the door. Private First Class Cohen emptied his BAR into the doorway while Sergeant Cardell and Private First Class Truss heaved fragmentation and white phosphorus grenades into the pillbox. This persuaded the Germans manning the position to surrender. Several prisoners had already emerged when German artillery fire, previously requested, descended. Both Germans and Americans took cover in 153 until the concentration was completed.

After Company I had reduced all the pillboxes and bunkers in its zone, a machine gun was emplaced to cover the left flank of the company. In the ditch to the north of this position, a German machine gun was located. For several hours the Company I gunner kept the enemy weapon neutralized. Later in the day the advance of the 301st on the north overran this ditch; thirty-eight prisoners were taken from it.

Company K, which had debouched from the woods on the right of Lieutenant Edward's company, was also delayed by the intensity of the enemy's mortar, artillery and automatic-weapons fire. Moreover, anti-personnel mines were encountered and little progress was made until the arrival of the tanks shortly after dawn. The tankers mistook some of Company K's personnel for Germans until Private First Class Ernest E. Climes stood up in full view of the enemy to identify himself and his companions. Then, under the covering fire of the tanks, the assault groups pushed forward reducing box after box. Teams under Sergeant Roy G. Watson and Sergeant Clarence Rafflesberger took the last two boxes on the initial objective and the company advanced to the Borg-Munzingen road.

To the south of the 3d Battalion, Major Stanion's 1st Battalion initially encountered similar difficulties. Before the tanks arrived the advance was slowed by the accuracy and intensity of the enemy's fire. However, with the coming of the armor, infantry-tank cooperation permitted the advance to continue and by 0900 hours, Companies A



**Top: The Borg-Munzingen road. Bottom: In the dragon's teeth.**

and B had reached their initial objectives along the Borg-Munzingen road.

In the wake of Company A's attack, Private First Class James Line-rich and Private First Class Tyrone Tywoneck stopped to investigate one of the pillboxes. To their astonishment they discovered the position was still manned and proceeded to reduce it. Their efforts netted eleven prisoners. Much the same thing happened to Sergeant James A. Graham of Company B. The bunker he tackled yielded five PWs. Shortly after the start of the attack Captain Jack P. Haggart of Company A was wounded and Lieutenant Norquist assumed command.

As the 302d Infantry closed up to the Borg-Munzingen road, the key defenses of the Siegfried Switch position passed from German to American hands. With Colonel Hagerty's men holding the northern portion of Munzingen Ridge and Colonel Johnson's men commanding its southern tip, the backbone of the enemy defense was cracked. The 94th was through the vaunted Siegfried Switch.

#### 376TH INFANTRY

On the night of the 18th, the company commander of one of the German antitank companies opposing the Division became lost and drove down the Kreuzweiler-Sinz road. Outside the latter town his vehicle struck an American mine and caught fire. This proved conclusively that the enemy had not mined their portion of the road and it could be used for the commitment of American armor should the 1st Battalion, 376th, need such assistance in the attack on Bannholz. This battalion, less the 3d Platoon of Company C which was to remain in Sinz to hold the town, moved to the line of departure at 0350 hours. Ten minutes later the artillery preparation on Bannholz Woods began. As the fire lifted from the edge of the woods and worked north, the infantry moved forward with Company A on the left of the battalion zone and Company B the right.

Because of known minefields Company A advanced on a relatively narrow front. In the inky darkness, the troops pushed through the heavy underbrush and swept forward to their objective. As they began organizing a perimeter defense, 20mm fire from the direction of Geisbusch Woods raked the area and artillery fire came in from the direction of Kreuzweiler. At dawn, groups of enemy within Bannholz who had been bypassed during the advance began to surrender.

On the right Company B, commanded by Captain Bowden, pushed into Bannholz. Resistance was light and the company speedily reached

its objective. After daylight, patrols were sent through the woods to conduct a thorough search. One patrol moving along the east edge of Bannholz discovered a knocked out tank; inside were two enemy artillery observers using the vehicle for an OP. Once these artillerymen had been taken prisoner, the volume of fire on the woods decreased materially.

At 0430 hours, Company C under Lieutenant Cornelius crossed its line of departure. Using marching fire, the company advanced to the northern edge of the woods where it was hit by an intense mortar concentration. Private First Class Thomas H. Goggins located several of the German 20mm positions in Geisbusch and the fire of the TDs supporting the company was employed against these weapons. By 0815 hours, Bannholz Woods was completely secured.

With the start of the attack on the morning of the 19th, the 3d Battalion, 376th, was situated midway between Sinz and Nennig, about two hundred yards north of the Sinz-Bubingen road. To the left, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop extended west to the Moselle. At 0400 hours, as the 919th threw a fifteen-minute concentration on Adenholz and Geisbusch Woods, this battalion lunged forward with the rest of the Division. Company K advanced on the left against Adenholz and Company L on the right against Geisbusch. About 400 yards from the LD in the zone of the former unit was a known enemy minefield, through which a narrow path had been cleared. As the company was traversing this lane, the enemy unleashed a terrific artillery concentration. Instinctively the men scattered, detonating mines and causing extremely heavy casualties. When the fire lifted, Lieutenant Daly, who was commanding the company, removed the wounded and withdrew the company to reorganize. Lieutenant Daly had been wounded himself, but continued to lead his troops until late in the afternoon.

To avoid this minefield, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston decided to attach the 1st Platoon of Company I to Company K and renew the advance through the zone of the right assault company. This was done and Lieutenant Daly's men struck at Adenholz Woods from the south. Supported by tanks, the company advanced as skirmishers. With little difficulty it cleared the western half of the woods. Following this, Lieutenant Daly turned his supporting tanks over to Lieutenant Cecil G. Dansby's platoon of Company I which was to clear that portion of Adenholz to the north of the Sinz-Kreuzweiler road. Tanks and infantry moved into the woods firing as they advanced. Opposition was light

and in short order the remaining portion of Adenholz Woods was reduced. This operation netted the platoon eighty prisoners.

On the right, Company L under Captain Brightman received a portion of the same fire that had scattered Lieutenant Daly's men in the minefield. As this fire lifted, the company moved forward rapidly, having no enemy mines to slow its advance. The men crossed the one thousand yards of open ground between Untersie Busch and Geisbusch on the double, firing into the woods as they advanced. Geisbusch was soon reduced and the 3d Battalion was on all its objectives. Speedily, the new positions were consolidated and the flank company contacted the 1st Battalion on the right.

With the exception of Oberleuken the Division then held all the assigned initial objectives specified in Field Order No. 11. The 5th Rangers, who were to have taken the town, had encountered extensive electrically controlled minefields and suffered heavily. Several attempts to force a passage proved unsuccessful and the venture was finally abandoned.



## *Chapter 28: FEBRUARY 19: SECOND OBJECTIVES*

**A**T 1000 HOURS on the morning of the 19th, the Division Commander informed all units that the attack would be continued at 1230 hours to seize the final objectives specified in Field Order No. 11. A fifteen-minute artillery preparation, from 1215 to 1230 hours was arranged and this set the stage for a continuation of the advance. The days and weeks in which the Division had slowly worn down the enemy facing it from behind the mines, dragon's teeth and pillboxes were about to pay dividends.

At Division headquarters, General Malony was certain that the time had come for corps to capitalize on the breach the 94th had made in the Siegfried Switch Line. Consequently, the CG called XX Corps and in conversation with General Walker urged that an armored force be committed. (The 10th Armored Division was then in reserve in the vicinity of Metz.) The 94th had penetrated the enemy line, but armor would be needed to knife through the battered and disorganized remains of the mauled German divisions within the Triangle to prevent their crossing the Saar, reorganizing and manning the fortifications of the main Siegfried Line, which paralleled the east bank of the river, for should the enemy succeed in crossing the river in force the bloody fighting of the previous month would have to be repeated beyond the Saar. At 1223 hours on the 19th, while the might of the Division artillery was falling on Kreuzweiler, Thorn, Munzingen, Faha, Keblingen and Oberleuken in preparation for the continuation of the advance, General Walker called the 94th CP and informed Colonel Bergquist that the 10th Armored Division "ought to be on the way in two hours."

### 301ST INFANTRY

The 1st Battalion, 301st, had suffered heavily in taking its initial objectives. As a result, when Colonel Hagerty received word for the continuation of the attack he ordered the 2d Battalion to pass through the 1st and continue the assault to Faha. At 1035 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Dohs moved his command out of Wochern, through Tettingen and on to Munzingen Ridge.

On the left of the regimental zone, the 3d Battalion prepared to move against Munzingen and the hill to the northeast which commanded the Borg-Munzingen highway. Once the series of hills to the east of this road were taken by the 301st and 302d Infantry, the Division would have a protected axis of advance deep into the Triangle, over which the 10th Armored could drive against the crumbling German resistance.

As the artillery preparation lifted in front of the 3d Battalion, four

American tanks and three TDs raced from the cover of Das Lee Woods. They drove down the ridge and swung to the east. The tracked vehicles crossed the Borg-Kirf highway, north of Munzingen, and climbed the slopes of the hill to the northeast that was the battalion's next objective.

Company L moved out behind the tanks and endeavored to keep up with their rate of advance. This proved impossible, but the infantry did eliminate several groups of enemy attempting to employ *Panzerfausts* against the American armor. At the same time, Company K moved down the ridge and swung to the south, bypassing the town of Munzingen. Circling north, it pushed forward to join the armor. In less than an hour, the hill northeast of Munzingen was completely cleared.

This lightning advance swept around Munzingen but did nothing toward reducing the town. Company I came forward after the artillery preparation had lifted and forced its way into the southeast corner of Munzingen. A furious battle followed in which the defenders of the town were reinforced by the tanks inside Munzingen. Relentlessly, Captain Donovan's company pressed forward from house to house; gradually the Germans were forced into one small area of town. From the south, Company I continued its assault while the remainder of the 3d Battalion, on the hill to the northeast, prevented the enemy from withdrawing toward Kirf to the north. On the hill, the tanks and TDs had been withdrawn to the reverse slope and turned their turrets toward Munzingen, once the infantry had consolidated the position. Before the town was completely cleared, a German tank attempted to shoot its way out. One of the TDs fired at the panzer and the tank replied in kind. The German shell passed through a bedding roll lashed to the hull of the tank destroyer, setting it afire. Another TD then opened up and knocked out the enemy vehicle. When the bedding roll was extinguished events settled back to normal. By 1620 hours all resistance in Munzingen had ended and the 3d battalion was in possession of its second objective.

After Companies K and L had secured the hill northeast of Munzingen, Germans could be heard in the woods to the east; Technical Sergeant Elmer H. Kinatader took the 3d Platoon of Company L forward to investigate. This platoon returned shortly with thirty prisoners who had been forming to launch a counterattack against the hill.

Prior to this second attack, the 2d Battalion, 301st, moved to positions in rear of the 1st. There, on the reverse slope of the ridge, Com-



panies E and F, the assault units, formed their skirmish lines. Promptly at 1230 hours, the two companies swept over the ridge and through the 1st Battalion. Approximately 2,500 yards of open ground separated the troops from their objective and as they pushed forward German artillery fire began to fall among them. Unhesitatingly, the seasoned troops continued their advance. The assault waves swept into Faha and the fight for the town began. By 1430 hours half of the town had been cleared and its complete occupation was assured. Consequently, Company G was sent to seize the hill to the northeast that overlooks Faha. For the remainder of the afternoon the battalion made slow but steady progress. At 1830 hours the town was won completely and Company G had tied in with the 3d Battalion to the north. This put all of the 301st objectives in American hands.

### 302D INFANTRY

To the right of the 301st, Colonel Johnson's men were also ready to continue the attack. With the failure of the 5th Ranger Battalion to take Oberleuken, plans within the regiment were altered slightly. The 1st Battalion, which had originally been scheduled to attack Keblingen, was assigned the mission of taking Oberleuken and the attack on Keblingen then was given to Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's 3d Battalion.

Before the 1st Battalion could get to Oberleuken, Hill 388 west of the town had to be taken. Keblingen was also protected by high ground in the path of the 3d Battalion's advance. These promontories had been used extensively by the Germans as OPs, since they gave excellent observation of the terrain beyond the Switch position. Both were well fortified.

As the artillery preparation lifted, Companies A and B with their supporting tanks moved across the Borg-Munzingen road and advanced against Hill 388. The attack moved forward rapidly, as the troops advanced up the western slope, reducing pillboxes and bunkers in quick succession. Enemy artillery and mortar fire fell on the hill, but the assault platoons suffered only slight casualties as most of the fire was to their rear among the support and weapons platoons. As the crest was reached, fire from the pillboxes around Oberleuken raked the area; enemy mortar and artillery fire increased. Since Hill 388 was a bald slope, devoid of cover, it was decided to withdraw most of the troops to the communication trenches on the west slope to gain some protection from the enemy fire. A few men were left on the crest to give the alert in the event a German counterattack developed.

Meanwhile, Company C, commanded by Lieutenant Robinson, had

moved out of Borg to take Keblingen. As the company arrived at Hill 388, the CO was informed that the objective had been changed and his unit was to assault Oberleuken immediately. After a hasty glance at the town, the company commander issued a new set of orders to his platoon leaders.

The platoon of tanks that was to support Lieutenant Robinson's company was already in position on the forward or east slope of the hill, prepared to move against Keblingen. Through heavy enemy fire Private First Class Bernard Piotrkowski, a company runner, made his way over the crest to the tanks. Upon reaching the nearest vehicle, he banged against its hull with his rifle butt and when the tank commander unbuttoned, informed him of the change in plans. This information then was radioed to the other tanks. The armor changed direction and began to pound Oberleuken. In short order they located the major pillboxes defending the town, buttoning them up with the fire of their 75s.

Company C moved over the ridge and advanced on Oberleuken as the fire of the 302d's Cannon Company and the 301st Field Artillery hit the town. Private First Class Edward C. Burnshaw, a member of one of the forward observation teams of the former unit, was seriously wounded by an exploding mine. Although suffering intense pain and weakened by additional wounds, he maintained constant contact with his company by radio adjusting accurate fire on the enemy positions. At the same time, the artillerymen literally walked their fire up and down the streets. As it lifted, the infantry entered town. Staff Sergeant Frederick R. Darby, firing a light machine gun from the hip, led the rush to the first group of houses. Once a foothold had been gained in the town, two of the supporting tanks came roaring into Oberleuken. They charged up the main street with their guns blazing while the other two supporting tanks remained on the outskirts of town covering the advance. Rapidly the infantry moved forward seizing house after house. Occasionally snipers delayed the advance, but the tanks soon eliminated such resistance. By 1630 hours the town was cleared completely. One hundred and ten prisoners were taken along with seven 120mm mortars.

The attack of the 3d Battalion was much the same story. Companies I and K stormed forward some two thousand yards to the hill northwest of Keblingen. Resistance encountered was for the most part light, but mortar and artillery fire caused some damage. The hill was quickly secured.



*Oberleuken . . . a shattered, desolate ruin where the odor of death hung heavy in the air*

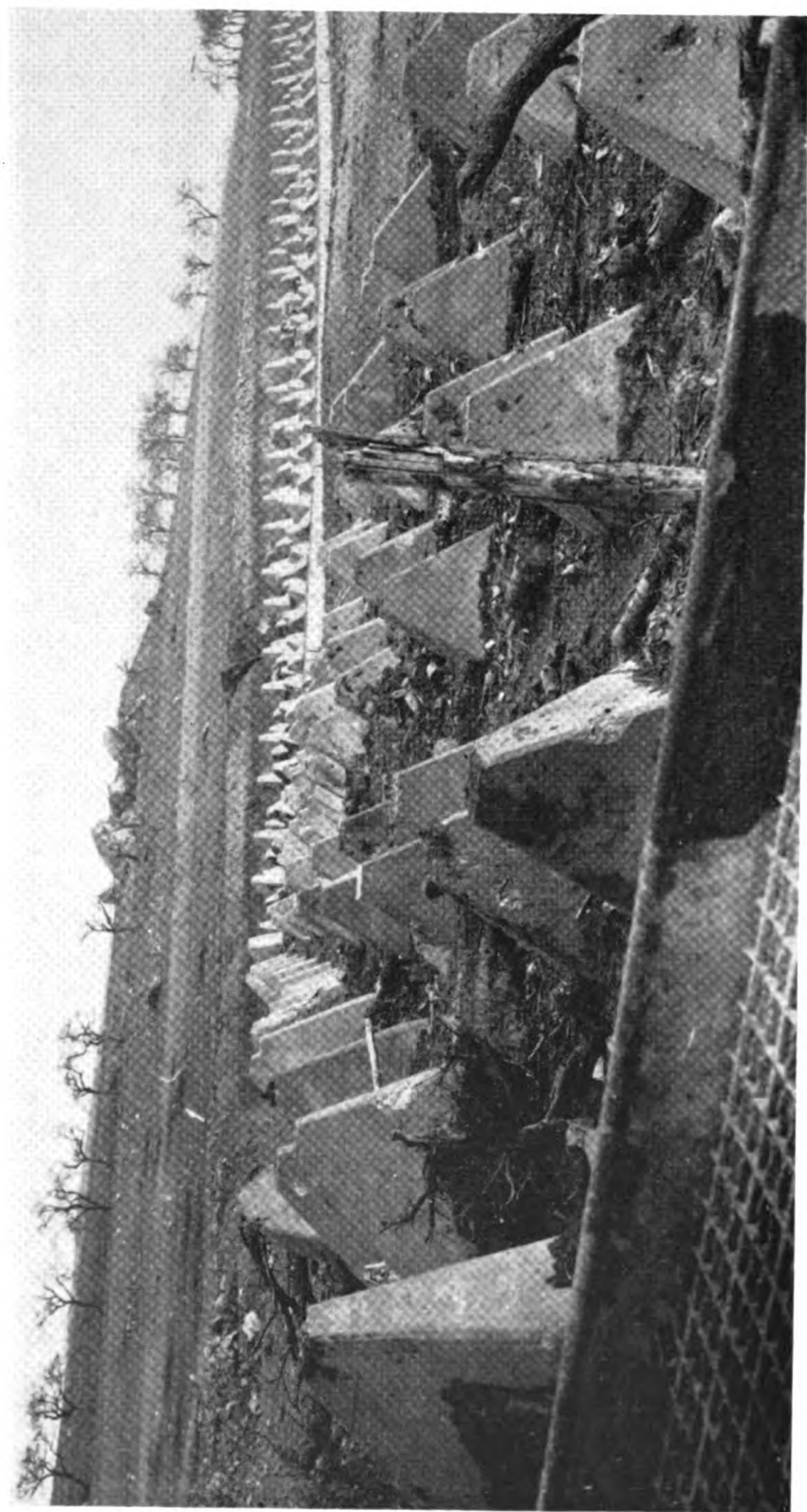


From Oberhardt Woods to the north of the hill, enemy fire was directed against the tanks supporting the attack of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's battalion. This fire was returned by the tankers, and four BARmen from Company I—Private First Class Alvin Cohen, Private First Class James Bender, Private First Class Kyle Thompson and Private Edward Mayfield—were sent to investigate. Circling the woods, they entered it from the north. The patrol swept through Oberhardt and as they reached its southern edge, they encountered two German women who had been manning an antitank gun.

Following the capture of the hill, Company L, which had been in reserve, was brought forward and assigned the task of completing the battalion mission by capturing Keblingen. Lieutenant Travis, commanding the company, hurriedly laid plans for this attack. An artillery preparation was placed on the town and the 2d Platoon, led by Lieutenant Charles C. Misner, moved down the hill directly supported by the fire of the attached tanks. Against heavy resistance, the platoon entered Keblingen. In short order a furious battle was in progress. Technical Sergeant Francis E. Kelly, the platoon sergeant, received a nasty neck wound when an enemy mine was detonated in his vicinity but refused to be evacuated. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Misner had returned to the hill alone, and guided the tankers into town. He then rejoined his platoon, inspiring them by his leadership, while Sergeant Kelly, despite his injury, directed the fire of the tanks at the more stubborn points of enemy resistance. Fighting raged for several hours; it was 1730 hours before the objective was taken. Then, both platoon leader and platoon sergeant, ignoring the volume of German mortar and artillery fire falling on Keblingen, organized litter squads and supervised the evacuation of the numerous wounded.

The 319th Engineers were also having a big day. Demolition parties with the infantry blew captured pillboxes as soon as they could be loaded and fuzed. Roads in the area were swept clear of mines, and treadway bridges were placed across the antitank ditches on the Borg-Munzingen and Borg-Oberleuken roads.

With the coming of darkness, Company B of the 302d moved from Hill 388 into the woods between Keblingen and Oberleuken, linking the newly won positions of the 1st and 3d Battalions. Technician Fifth Grade Robert Hoots and Private First Class William B. McElwee of the above company were sent to the junction of the road running south from Keblingen and the Oberleuken-Orsholz road to set up their



*Dragon's teeth and blown pillbox north of Borg*

machine gun and form a roadblock. As they approached this position, they found an enemy machine-gun crew already emplaced at the site. With little ado, they captured the Germans and took over the position. On the following morning three more Germans, the relief for this outpost, appeared. They also were taken into custody.

During the night, both the 301st and 302d Infantry Regiments prepared and improved their hasty defensive positions while awaiting the coming of daylight and new orders.

### 376TH INFANTRY

Far to the north, the 1st Battalion, 376th, had not been idle. At 1100 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Miner was called back to Sinz and given final instructions for the seizure of Der Langen Woods and Hill 398 just north of the woods. The six TDs of Company A, 708th Tank Destroyer Battalion, assisting Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men, took positions on the northeastern edge of Bannholz Woods to deliver overhead fire. All the HMGs of Company D were also emplaced within the woods to support this attack. Company E was ordered into Bannholz to take over the 1st Battalion's zone, while the 3d Platoon of Company C, located in Sinz, was returned to company control. These preparations took longer than anticipated and it was 1300 hours before the 1st Battalion moved to the attack.

As the fire of the artillery, the TDs and the machine guns burst along Munzingen Ridge the assault companies moved forward. Company A took the right of the battalion zone; Company B the left. They advanced in squad columns under supporting fire which did not lift until the assault units were within two hundred yards of their objectives. As this overhead fire ceased, the squad columns broke and formed skirmish lines. In a blaze of marching fire, the troops pushed to the crest of the ridge. During this advance, enemy observation from the north was effectively screened by the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion which dropped a curtain of white phosphorus shells from Munzingen Ridge to Moscholz Woods.

As Company B approached Der Langen Woods, it was hit by a terrific concentration. Mortar, artillery and 20mm projectiles rained on the company. For almost an hour this fire completely halted the advance of the 1st Platoon. However, the remainder of the company broke loose and entered the woods. Staff Sergeant Charles H. Nichols and Staff Sergeant Robert F. Burnett led their squads through a series of communication trenches that circled the woods, eliminating the Germans defending these positions.

After the infantry reached their objective, the TDs moved forward to join them; in quick succession three of the tank destroyers were knocked out by an 88 in Moscholz Woods. The remaining vehicles then took shelter behind a small knoll and from there made their way toward Der Langen by a more deflated route. As the leading TD approached the woods, another 88 concealed in the southeast corner of Der Langen opened fire knocking out the tank destroyer. With this, the infantry moved against the German antitank gun which they captured shortly. The two remaining TDs reached their objective safely. Staff Sergeant Brewster of the 919th Field Artillery, acting as a forward observer, called for fire on the 20mm guns which were engaging the 1st Platoon from Moscholz Woods. After several concentrations he silenced these weapons.

To the south of Der Langen Woods, Company A discovered a network of trenches and firing pits. In mopping up the area Private First Class Richard J. Kamins found a German sitting in a hole crying. Without talking the prisoner pointed to a nearby position from which Private First Class Kamins flushed fifteen more Germans. By 1400 hours, the woods and hill were completely cleared. Company C then moved forward to strengthen the defense of the new area and that evening the battalion was informed that it would revert to reserve as soon as the 10th Armored Division passed through its position the following morning.

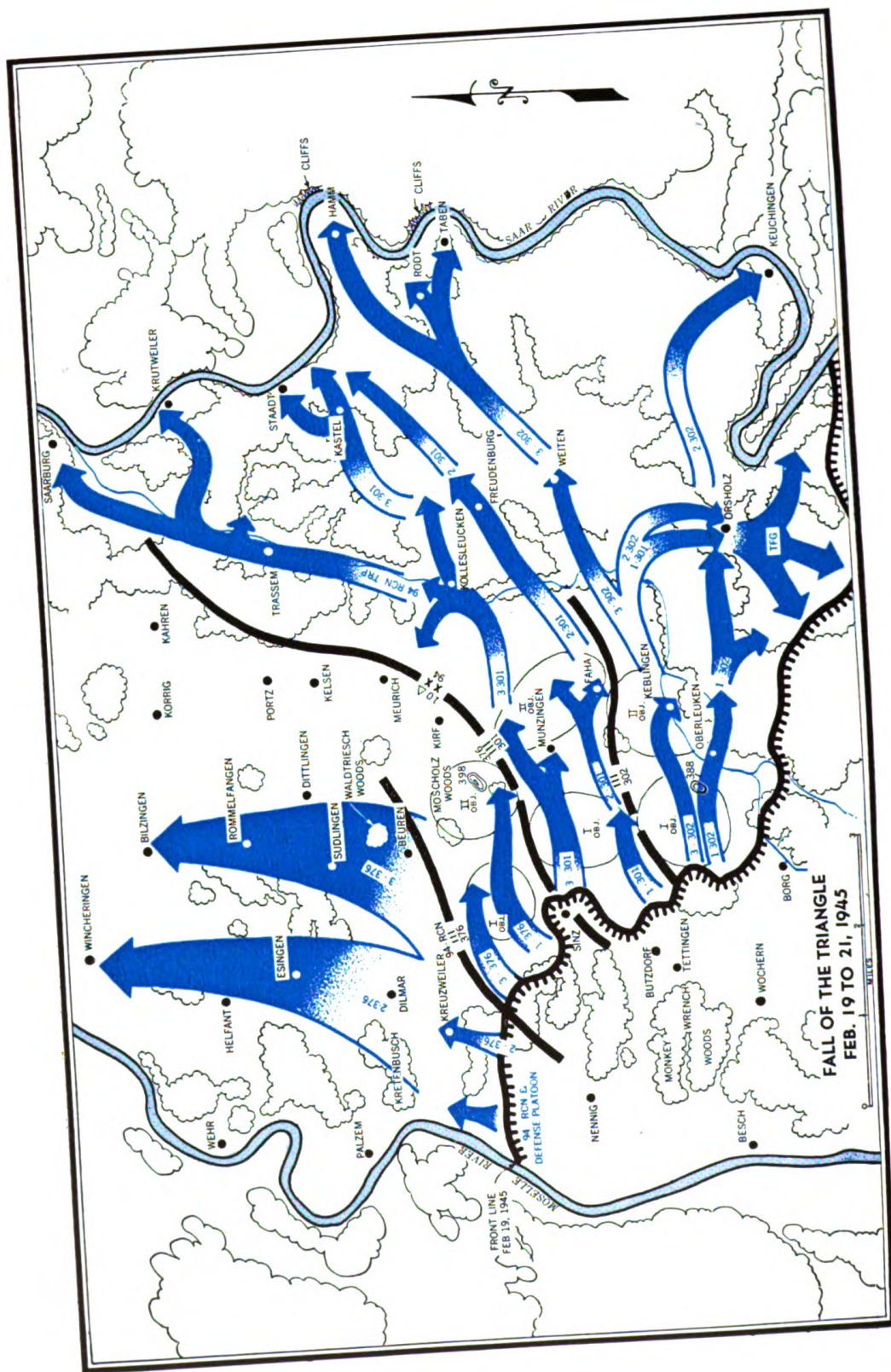
As a result of the day's operations, seven square miles of dominating terrain had been overrun, five pillboxes and twenty-three bunkers reduced, four enemy tanks destroyed and 872 prisoners captured. Moreover, Munzingen Ridge was in the hands of the 94th from Borg to Der Langen Woods. All the hills east of the Borg-Munzingen road along this line were also in American hands. The vital axis, deep into the Triangle, over which an armored division could be committed, had been completely secured. To the south, the vaunted Siegfried Switch Line lay shattered forever. The 94th had completed the bloody business of cracking the enemy's defense and had provided corps with a vital bridgehead.

At about the time the Division was moving toward the final objectives set forth in Field Order No. 11 word was received at the command post of the 10th Armored Division in Metz to move into the Triangle immediately. Soon mobile loud speakers were moving through the streets of Metz informing the men of the 10th Armored to report to their units at once. Many of these troops arrived at their bivouac



areas barely in time to catch their vehicles as they pulled out. Others were less fortunate and had to hitch rides with units following their own.

All through the night of the 19th-20th the vehicles and tanks of the 10th Armored rolled toward the rear areas of the 94th. As the columns reached the German border, they began to split. By daylight there were tanks parked in Borg, Wochern, Besch, Perl, Sierck and many of the surrounding towns and villages. The attack would continue with two divisions abreast, the 94th on the right.



## Chapter 29: REDUCTION OF THE TRIANGLE

FOR THE 94TH DIVISION the night of February 19-20 proved another busy one. The 10th Armored Division had been assigned as its zone within the Triangle the area from the Moselle River east to the Borg-Munzingen Ridge; as a result, most of the installations of the 94th had to be moved eastward. At the same time, plans were laid for a continuation of the attack in the right half of the Triangle.

The 10th Armored Division was charged with the mission of clearing the main portion of the area between the Moselle and Saar Rivers and of attempting to capture intact the river bridges in its zone. To assist the armor in this task, the complete 376th Combat Team was attached. The 94th Reconnaissance Troop and the Division Headquarters Defense Platoon were under Colonel McClune's control at this time and these attachments were temporarily allowed to remain in effect. The 94th, less the above elements, which reduced the division to something less than two-thirds strength, was to clear the eastern portion of the Triangle between Lenk Branch and the Saar River, from Orsholz on the south to Saarburg on the north. This area was hilly and completely unsuited for the deployment of armor.

To further prepare the way for the armored division, the 376th was charged with the capture of the towns of Kreuzweiler and Thorn, which would provide the armor with the second breach in the German defenses. Following the reduction of these towns, the 376th was to be passed through by the tanks; the regiment would then proceed north on a wide front, mopping up in the wake of the armor. The 2d Battalion was designated for the reduction of Kreuzweiler and the reconnaissance troop and defense platoon were to take Thorn.

The 301st Infantry was assigned the mission of taking Kollesleuken, Freudenburg, Kastel and Staadt. In addition, the regiment was to maintain contact with the 10th Armored Division until the 94th Reconnaissance Troop was released to take over the zone between the 301st and the armor. To accomplish these tasks, the 3d Battalion was given the left of the regimental zone and the 2d Battalion the right.

To the 302d Infantry fell the task of cleaning up all enemy resistance south of the 301st's zone. To assist Colonel Johnson's men, the 1st Battalion, 301st, was attached to the regiment and, along with the 2d Battalion, 302d, was formed into a task force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis. Task Force Gaddis was to seize the heavily fortified town of Orsholz which earlier had dealt so severely with the 1st Battalion, 301st. Old scores were to be settled. To the 5th Ranger Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 302d, fell the task of reducing the

woods between Oberleuken and Orsholz, while the 3d Battalion was to seize the towns of Weiten, Rodt, Taben and Hamm.

### 301ST INFANTRY

At 0715 hours on the 20th the 2d Battalion, 301st, began its march to Freudenburg. The battalion moved forward to Lenk Branch, crossed the stream and gained a firm hold on the east bank. Since the bridges over the stream had been destroyed, the supporting tanks and TDs were prevented from crossing. But, as the advance continued, the engineers set about constructing a bridge.

From the stream, the assault groups began the steep climb toward their objective, advancing rapidly against slight resistance. Outside of Freudenburg, a battery of Russian 7.62cm guns was encountered. The enemy was thoroughly surprised but put up enough resistance to win time to destroy his field pieces. Soon the German artillerymen were overwhelmed and the survivors of the encounter made prisoners.

Shortly before noon, Company F fought its way into the southwest corner of town. Resistance was not heavy, but the houses had to be searched methodically and a few troublesome snipers eliminated. As Company E joined the battle, the tempo of the advance quickened. However, by mid-afternoon it was apparent that the town was too large to be cleared rapidly by the forces already committed. As a result, Company G was thrown into the fray from the northwest. Before dark Freudenburg was cleared completely.

The 3d Battalion did not attack until 0800 hours on the morning of the 20th; it moved out in a column of companies with Company L in the lead. In Das Bruch Woods part of the unit lost direction and headed southeast. As the men emerged from the woods, they encountered elements of the 2d Battalion and were informed that they were out of their sector. Returning through the woods the troops met some of the supporting tanks attached to the battalion. These they mounted and moved down the open ridge to the east. When they reached the crest overlooking Kollesleuken, the advance stopped abruptly. Enemy fire from the high ground to the east began to land about them and one of the tank commanders thrust his head from the turret of his vehicle just as a *Panzerfaust* burst alongside. The infantry who had been riding the tanks hit the ground, taking advantage of what little cover existed. As quickly as possible, the group pulled back to reorganize after discovering the reason for the volume of fire directed against them. Enemy forces were retreating from Kirf, moving along the valley road to Kollesleuken, while covered by fire from the east.



*A patrol moves cautiously past a burning American tank during the drive to the Saar*

Once behind the crest, the infantry and tanks assumed positions from which they engaged the retreating German column in the valley. This fire scattered and disorganized the enemy, many of whom crossed the small stream paralleling the Kirf-Kollesleuken road and took shelter in the woods to the north.

The 1st Platoon of Company L was sent to outflank part of this retreating column. As it moved up a hedgerow toward the woods, an enemy machine gun stalled further advance. It was soon evident that the Germans had established a line along the edge of the woods bordering the stream. The fire of the 2d and 3d Platoons was employed, but even this did not relieve the pressure on the 1st. Communications with battalion were out, so the tanks and heavy machine guns lined up along the crest of the hill in lieu of artillery support. Under their protective fire Company L, less the 1st Platoon, and Company K moved down the hill, across the stream and into the woods. While Company K cleared the woods, Company L turned east across the clearing and into Kollesleuken. Though the defenders of the town fought desperately, by 1500 hours this objective was taken.

Company I then moved into Kollesleuken and was given the task of maintaining contact with the 10th Armored Division in Kirf while the rest of the battalion moved across Lenk Branch. Since the bridge over the stream had been burned, it became necessary for the tanks to find a ford, and the 2d Platoon of Company L was detailed to accompany the armor as a security force. A ford was located and the tanks and TDs overtook the assault units of the 3d Battalion as they

were advancing against Eider Berg. The tracked vehicles swept by the infantry swarming up the hill against light opposition. Four pillboxes on the southern nose of the promontory which had watched the methodical reduction of Freudenburg quickly surrendered.

The following morning the advance continued eastward. Lieutenant Colonel Dohs' troops pushed through the woods along the regimental right boundary in column of companies. No resistance was encountered and by 1100 hours Company F, in the lead, was overlooking the Saar River.

Also in a column of companies, the 3d Battalion crossed its line of departure at 0830 hours the same morning. Company K, in the lead, met some resistance in Kastel, but by 1025 hours had secured the town. Company L then passed through the assault unit and moved out on the bluff overlooking the Saar River and the town of Serrig on the far bank.

### 302D INFANTRY

From Keblingen the 3d Battalion, 302d, jumped off at 0700 hours on the 20th headed for Weiten. Company I was on the left, Company L on the right and Company K in reserve. Halfway to their objective the assault companies were slowed down by enemy machine-gun fire from the hill to their front. Private First Class Peter Maculawicz and two other men flanked the hill to the right and, carefully working their way forward, rushed the nearest gun. They quickly overpowered the crew taking them prisoner. Then the remaining machine gun drew the concentrated fire of both companies and was neutralized.

As the battalion continued across the hill and down into the valley, the bridge over the stream below them was observed to be intact. At about this time, a lone German raced from the woods toward the stream. This man was pinned down by rifle fire while the leading elements of Company K made a rush for the bridge. It was taken intact and upon examination was found to be prepared for demolition. The wires were cut, following which the company crossed with dry feet. Company I on the left was not as fortunate. There was no bridge in their zone of advance so the troops waded the stream.

In the woods west of Weiten, the battalion halted to await the arrival of its tanks. Battery A of the 465th AAA Battalion moved its quadruple-mounted .50-caliber machine guns into position and raked the town with fire. Then the tanks arrived and started down the road into Weiten. As they moved into the open, they were engaged by German antitank fire which forced them back into the woods. Lieutenant Car-





*The advance to Weiten*

men L. Ramirez took the 2d Platoon of Company L to outflank this enemy weapon and, as the platoon closed in, Private First Class Raymond H. Laabs and Private First Class William F. Eggers knocked out the gun.

Again the tanks moved forward. They began firing into the houses on the west side of Weiten and at 1415 hours Companies I and L attacked. Company I took that part of town on the north of the Faha-Weiten road; Company L that on the south. After the leading platoons had swept to the center of town, First Sergeant James E. Capps led the 4th Platoon and Company Headquarters forward to mop up behind the assault. In one house they found several German officers and the remains of a command post. One of these staff officers stated that the attack was wholly unexpected; that the Americans were anywhere in the vicinity came as a complete surprise. Also, several armored vehicles and some antitank weapons with their camouflage nets still in place, were taken—Division artillery had effectively disrupted enemy communications. By darkness Weiten was cleared.



On the morning of the 21st, Companies K and L pressed farther east. By this time the bulk of the routed German forces had been captured or had surrendered, though some elements made good their escape across the Saar. The companies pushed forward rapidly and by the middle of the afternoon Taben, Rodt and Hamm had been taken.

Simultaneous with the attack of the 3d Battalion, 302d, on the morning of the 20th, Major Stanion's 1st Battalion jumped off to the east from its positions around Oberleuken. After reducing a series of six enemy-held pillboxes, the troops continued their drive into the woods extending westward from Orsholz. This advance was continued on the 21st when the battalion cleared the Oberleuken-Orsholz road and the woods southeast of the former town.

#### TASK FORCE GADDIS

On the night of the 19th, Task Force Gaddis, composed of the 2d Battalion of the 302d and the 1st Battalion of the 301st, moved into Keblingen. The following morning as the 3d Battalion of the 302d moved to attack Weiten, the 2d Battalion of the 302d followed at about four hundred yards. To the rear of Major Maixner's men, by about the same distance, came the 1st Battalion, 301st. En route to Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's objective, Task Force Gaddis swung southeast along a second-grade road that ran into the woods northwest of Orsholz.

As his forward assembly area Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis had chosen a position in the woods about five hundred yards northwest of Orsholz. In the approach march Company G led, followed by Companies E, F and the 1st Battalion, 301st. The point was in charge of Private First Class Robert S. Karlix whose quick action in the vicinity of the assembly area netted nineteen prisoners and three horse-drawn carts. By 1150 hours both battalions had closed in the assembly area.

Plan of attack called for a drive on Orsholz from the north. The Orsholz-Weiten road was to serve as the boundary between battalions with the 1st Battalion taking the west of town; the 2d Battalion the east. In direct support of the operation was the 301st Field Artillery which had forward observers with all the assault units. Company H's mortars were brought forward from Keblingen to the assembly area since they could support the attack more readily from the latter position. Attached to the task force was one platoon of light tanks and a platoon of mediums. These vehicles had difficulty in crossing Lenk

Branch and for this reason the attack was postponed until they came into position.

Meanwhile, a patrol led by Sergeant Simond J. Sendric was sent toward Weiten to determine whether or not there was anything in rear of the task force and to establish contact with the 3d Battalion, 302d. This group accomplished its mission, returning without incident to report that no enemy activity was noted en route. While this was happening, Company E, which had been designated the 2d Battalion reserve, dug defensive positions in the woods north of town to foil any enemy attempt at counterattack.

At 1400 hours the east wing of the task force (2d Battalion, 302d) launched its attack with Company F, deployed with all three rifle platoons abreast, on the left; and Company G on the right. Because of the delayed arrival of the armor there had not been time to arrange an artillery preparation.

As Company F moved into the open, supported by the direct fire of the tanks and the overhead fire of Sergeant Joseph A. Romanowski's section of machine guns, they were engaged by enemy automatic weapons firing from Orsholz. Ignoring this machine-gun fire, Captain Kop's platoons rushed forward, entering town on the double.

Company G, after negotiating the minefields north of the objective, advanced in its zone with little difficulty. The leading platoons entered Orsholz and had the task of clearing the company's section well under way before the supporting tanks arrived in town. Captain Griffin who led the company in the assault kept his troops pressing forward rapidly.

Once within the town, Private First Class James Heard of Company H set his machine gun in position in the middle of the main street to keep the enemy from crossing back and forth. Sniper fire was directed against this weapon and one of its crew hit. As the American infantrymen closed in on the sniper, he threw down his rifle and surrendered. By 1800 hours the 2d Battalion had taken all of its objective, rounding up over one hundred prisoners. The command post was established in Orsholz and plans were laid for a continuation of the attack to the south the following day.

Simultaneous with the attack of the 2d Battalion of the 302d, the 1st Battalion of the 301st struck at the western half of Orsholz. Formation prescribed for the assault was column of companies, Company A leading the attack, followed by Companies B and C. The latter units were so disposed because they had suffered heavily in their attack on Munzingen Ridge the previous day, and were seriously understrength. Under the protective fire of the armor supporting the operation, Com-



*An enemy roadblock on the outskirts of Orsholz is prepared for demolition*

pany A moved forward. The leading elements quickly crossed the open ground between the woods and town and entered Orsholz against little resistance. Taking house after house, the troops moved southward in small groups. The town itself was a shambles, having been heavily pounded by Division and corps artillery and bombed from the air. Companies B and C, following the assault unit, thoroughly searched all buildings in their path, mopping up the few defenders bypassed by Company A. By evening all assigned objectives had been taken.

Throughout the 21st the 1st Battalion remained in Orsholz. The 2d Platoon of Company B was organized into a combat patrol and sent to investigate the pillbox area south of town. For the most part these boxes were unoccupied, but it took nearly all day to complete a thorough search of the positions. First Sergeant William M. Kelley of Company B, one of the survivors of the first Orsholz attack, had volunteered to accompany this patrol as they were to pass through part

of the area where his company had been isolated a month earlier. Sergeant Kelley found several pieces of clothing bearing serial numbers which he recognized. Also the patrol located the graves of several men of the first Company B. After the ill-fated attack, the enemy had buried these Americans south of the town.

Companies E and G of the 302d also moved south of Orsholz on the morning of the 21st to seize that portion of the pillbox area in the zone of the 2d Battalion. A roadblock at the south end of town had to be blown to allow the tanks to accompany the infantry troops. As the first bunker was approached, the point of the advance guard observed a lone German sitting on a chair near the entrance to the bunker quietly reading a newspaper. He made no attempt at resistance and readily informed the party that practically all the Germans who had been manning the position had fled east during the night. A careful search of the area proved the truth of this statement; only two prisoners were taken.

As Lieutenant Butler of Company E led his men to the last bunker, which was in the vicinity of Nohn, contact was made with the 5th Rangers. Company E then swung east into the woods bordering the Saar River. To the right, Company G searched its assigned area and sent a contact patrol to Ober Tünsdorf which was also held by the Rangers. By evening the mission of Task Force Gaddis, and of the 302d Infantry to which it belonged, was completed.

First Sergeant Thomas F. Hudgins and Technical Sergeant Howard J. Morton of Company F arrived in Orsholz following its fall, after an interesting tour of the Triangle. They had been picked up at the Division rest camp in Cattenon, France, by a jeep driver who assured them he knew the whereabouts of their company. The party proceeded up the Borg-Munzingen road and continued north until they encountered elements of the 10th Armored Division. After receiving directions from the tankers, they started a search for their unit. In due course, the men arrived in Orsholz only to learn that they had been traveling a good deal of the time over roads as yet unswept by the engineers.

On the evening of the 21st a combat patrol under Lieutenant Hunter left Orsholz to seize Keuchingen, which lies to the east along the Saar River opposite Mettlach. The party consisted of the 1st Platoon of Company F, one light and two medium tanks, a machine-gun section and a mortar squad. At 2140 hours this patrol arrived on the high



*In extended order, an infantry company moves toward the Saar River*

hill northwest of its objective. There was no sign of enemy activity and the town appeared quiet. Lieutenant Hunter had been informed that Keuchingen consisted of about thirty houses, but from the hill it was obvious that this information was incorrect; Keuchingen was considerably larger. Accompanied by eight volunteers, the patrol leader moved forward on reconnaissance. Without opposition this group entered town and searched the first few houses from cellar to attic. The remainder of the patrol was then brought forward and a thorough search of the town began. This task took twelve hours. Shortly after it was completed elements of the 5th Ranger Battalion were brought forward to garrison Keuchingen. The patrol returned to Orsholz.

#### 376TH INFANTRY-94TH RECON TROOP (REINFORCED)

Far to the west, the 376th Infantry, which, with its combat team units, had been attached to the 10th Armored Division, had also been busy. On the night of the 19th, plans for the seizure of Kreuzweiler and Thorn by the 2d Battalion of the 376th and the 94th Reconnaissance Troop (reinforced) respectively, were perfected.

At 0530 hours on the morning of the 20th, the 2d Battalion moved from Wies along the Sinz-Bubingen road. After a short march the battalion swung north moving into the draw along the line of departure. The axis of attack had been designated as the trail running north across the open ground into the woods south of Kreuzweiler. Company F was to clear a 300-yard zone on the left of this trail while Company G took a similar frontage on the right. Company E, which had been

withdrawn from Bannholz Woods during the night, was placed in battalion reserve.

Following a five-minute artillery preparation, the assault companies jumped off at 0700 hours. As they moved across the open ground and were approaching the woods, Company G was engaged by several enemy machine guns. Maneuver to the right was restricted by a *Schü* minefield so the assault elements, employing marching fire, rushed the enemy weapons. This fire silenced the German guns. The position was overwhelmed and the advance continued. Once within the woods, both companies fanned out and continued forward. When another machine gun opened up on the left of the company, Sergeant Harold L. Crosley and his squad moved against it. Darting from cover to cover among the trees, the men made poor targets for the German gunners. Soon the infantrymen closed on the enemy position and destroyed it.

Unknowingly, Company G had bypassed one German machine gun and as Captain Dodson, the company commander, and his runner entered the woods, the crew of this weapon was preparing to put their weapon in action. In short order this threat was eliminated. Meanwhile, the battalion swept through the remainder of the woods unopposed.

On the edge of the woods south of Kreuzweiler, Lieutenant Colonel Martin's battalion stopped and reorganized. Then, at 0805 hours the attack on the town itself was launched. The leading elements of the battalion had dashed across the open ground and gained the shelter of the first houses when a heavy mortar concentration fell. Through this and intense small-arms fire, the remainder of the assault waves rushed for the cover of the southmost buildings in Kreuzweiler. Enemy fire on the town continued heavy but the attack was pressed sharply. By 1000 hours, half the town had been cleared and ninety-six prisoners taken. To maintain a steady pressure upon the German defenders platoons were passed one through the other. Every house had to be assaulted. As the attack continued, the Germans were forced into an ever smaller area. Two-thirds of the town was in American hands by 1300 hours; resistance grew stiffer all the time. One of the prisoners taken in Kreuzweiler turned out to be a Jap, the first taken by the 94th.

About this time a German counterattacking force of four tanks and one hundred infantry was moving south from Dilmar on the Kreuzweiler-Dilmar road. Previously the 919th Field Artillery Battalion had registered on the road junction midway between these towns and when the Germans reached the artillery check point, they moved

squarely into a deadly artillery concentration. This stopped the counter-attack cold and the enemy never managed to form for another.

At 1335 hours Combat Command R of the 10th Armored Division rolled into town. After checking the front-line positions of the two assault companies, the tanks took off with their guns blazing. They swept through the enemy-held portion of town and north to Dilmar. In the face of this display of force, the last German resistance melted. Thirty minutes later the town had been mopped up and was completely cleared. Prisoner tally for the operation passed the hundred mark.

Company E, the battalion reserve, had meanwhile been assigned several additional missions. The 1st Platoon swung west of Kreuzweiler and took positions from which it could protect the left flank of the battalion. During the afternoon a patrol investigated Thorner Woods where it captured an enemy machine gun and crew. The 2d Platoon of the company had the task of completely clearing the woods south of Kreuzweiler. It speedily completed this assignment; then assumed positions below the town along the northern edge of the woods.

On the morning of the 20th prior to attacking Thorn the 94th Reconnaissance Troop and the Division Headquarters Defense Platoon, which had requested action, assembled at the crossroads in Wies. This force, organized in two platoons, proceeded north toward their objective. Their line of departure was the draw just south of Thorn which was reached via the communication trench running parallel to the Bubingen-Thorn road. In support of the operation were two light and two medium tanks; arrangements had also been made for a five-minute artillery preparation.

At 0700 hours the platoon commanded by Lieutenant Frank A. Penn cleared the line of departure and moved forward, but the remaining platoon of the provisional force was stopped almost immediately by heavy mortar and artillery fire. Surrounding the town were thousands of mines most of which were of the antipersonnel variety. These delayed the attack somewhat. One of the supporting tanks was disabled outside of Thorn by an AT mine and as the crew dismounted to continue fighting as infantry, the tank commander and a corporal were killed by enemy fire.

The defenses of Thorn were built around a château which was the largest building in the town. Two of the remaining tanks assisted the assaulting troops while the third was sent to the Moselle to act as flank security. In town the tankers poured shells into the château



and the surrounding buildings. As the fighting continued, one of the armored vehicles approached to within twenty feet of the château and fired two rounds through a window. Bazookamen added their fire and behind this support the Recon and Defense Platoon men stormed the fortress. This building netted twenty-five prisoners. Soon the entire town was cleared and the 1st Platoon of the 94th Reconnaissance Troop outposted the area. At 2200 hours, the Germans deluged Thorn with a 120mm mortar barrage which caused the heaviest casualties of the entire operation, wounding fourteen men of the Recon Troop.

As the armor passed through this composite force, it reverted to 94th control. However, movement proved impossible until the following day as the tankers had exclusive road priority. When Captain Ashton's men returned to the Division zone, they passed through Company I of the 301st and continued to push toward Saarburg. Their new mission was to clear the northern half of the Division sector, at the same time maintaining contact with the 10th Armored Division.

Plan of attack of the 10th Armored called for an assault along three axes of advance. The major thrust was aimed up the Borg-Munzingen road along Munzingen Ridge, now wide open in the path of the penetration of the 94th. To the west another thrust was pushed up the road leading northwest from Sinz, cleared by the 301st and 376th. Still farther west, the third drive was parallel to the Moselle over ground opened up by the 376th, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop and DHQ Defense Platoon. All three armored columns were slowed down the morning of the 20th by hasty defenses which the enemy had thrown up during the night. German antitank guns in and around Kirf proved particularly troublesome. A blown bridge beyond Thorn also impeded the advance initially, but during the afternoon all enemy resistance was swept aside and the armor raced north. Despite the coming of darkness, the attack was pressed and at midnight the apex of the Triangle reached. None of the bridges over the Saar or the Moselle was taken intact; all that then remained was to mop up the scattered pockets of resistance that had been left in the wake of the advancing tanks.

This clean-up mission fell to the 376th Infantry. At 0900 hours on the 21st, the 2d Battalion, which had been assigned the left of the regimental zone for the mopping-up operation, advanced north from Kreuzweiler. The battalion moved out with all three companies in line: Company F on the left, Company E in the center, Company G on the right, to sweep the area from the Moselle on the left to a

HEADQUARTERS 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO 94 U.S. Army

21 February 1945

AG 201.22 (21Feb45) CG

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Soldiers of the 94th Inf Division & Attached Units.

1. Today marks the victorious end of a series of operations to capture the triangle of German territory between the Saar and the Moselle Rivers.

2. Your courage, endurance, and skill in fighting have made this possible.

3. I congratulate every one of you on a magnificent battlefield performance.

4. The combats in TETTINGEN-BUTZDORF, NENNIG, WIES, BERG, and later the captures of KEBLINGEN, FREUDENBURG, WEITEN, ORSHOLZ, and KOLLESLEUKEN all showed your military qualities and these fights will live long in this Division's history.

5. Your successes have had a great effect upon the War. You have practically annihilated two German divisions and have reduced the combat efficiency of a third (Panzer Division) to a small fraction of its original efficiency. You have captured 2,851 prisoners and wrested from the enemy more than 65 square miles of wealthy, productive country.

6. Your efforts are understood and appreciated by your commanders and by your country.

*HARRY J. MALONY*  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commanding



*Nazi prisoners taken near Beuren wait to be moved to the rear*

line running generally through Kreuzweiler, Esingen and Wincheringen on the right. Lieutenant Colonel Martin's men advanced against very little resistance. A few scattered prisoners were taken, but they had little fight left in them. In Kretenbusch Woods, Company E found the remnants of a German artillery battalion. Effects of American counterbattery fire were clearly evident; the woods were littered with dead and the enemy guns were twisted masses of wreckage. Company G emerged from the northern edge of Loschenkopf Woods to be greeted warmly by fire from elements of the 10th Armored Division. Captain Dodson hastily constructed a white flag and waving it, moved forward to identify himself to the tankers. Following this, the battalion moved into Wincheringen where they closed at 1800 hours. They were then directed to proceed to Mannebach immediately.

To the right of the 2d Battalion, the 3d Battalion, 376th, moved forward in the eastern half of the regimental zone. Its area was bounded on the left by Kreuzweiler, Esingen and Wincheringen (exclusive). The right flank was generally along the line: Beuren-Dittlingen-Bilzingen. The battalion advanced with three companies abreast: Company I on the left, Company K in the center, Company L on the right. Again, there was little opposition and the stragglers left behind by the hasty withdrawal of the enemy were rounded up without difficulty. In Waldtriesch Woods the demolished remnants of another German artillery battalion were located. This position had been hit by aerial bombardment and several bodies had been blown into the tree tops. Throughout the day the 3d Battalion continued

its uninterrupted advance and was just closing into Bilzingen at 1830 hours when orders were received to proceed to Mannebach without delay. At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 376th, which had been motorized and placed in regimental reserve prior to the beginning of the attack on the 19th, was also ordered forward to Mannebach.

By the close of the 21st, the Saar–Moselle Triangle was completely American—the attrition policy had paid off. All objectives had been taken. The 94th held the area from Orsholz north to Staadt and east to the Saar River, while CT 376 and the 10th Armored Division controlled the rest of the Triangle. In three days the Division had captured five times as much ground as had been won in all of the preceding month and had added 1,469 PWs to an ever-mounting total.

A great victory had been won but the price had been high. On the 19th, 611 wounded passed through the clearing station. The following day casualties totalled 344 and the toll on the 21st came to 173 wounded. To treat and evacuate these men speedily, the 319th Medical Battalion was pressed to the utmost. Four treatment sections were set up and worked at top speed. Nontransportable cases were passed to the 30th General Hospital while the transportable cases were moved to the 100th Evacuation Hospital in Luxembourg. Many of the casualties were from *Schü* mines which characteristically blew off one or both feet or mangled them to the point where amputation was necessary. Removal of the wounded and dead from these antipersonnel minefields was always difficult and dangerous; Captain Donald M. Stewart, the graves registration officer of the 301st Infantry, was killed while engaged in just such work. Mines, mortars and artillery fire accounted for the greatest share of the total casualties for only twelve per cent of the wounds inflicted were the result of small-arms fire. Of the wounded received at the clearing company only one-tenth of one per cent died. During the three-day operation the 319th Medical Battalion used forty cases of blood plasma.

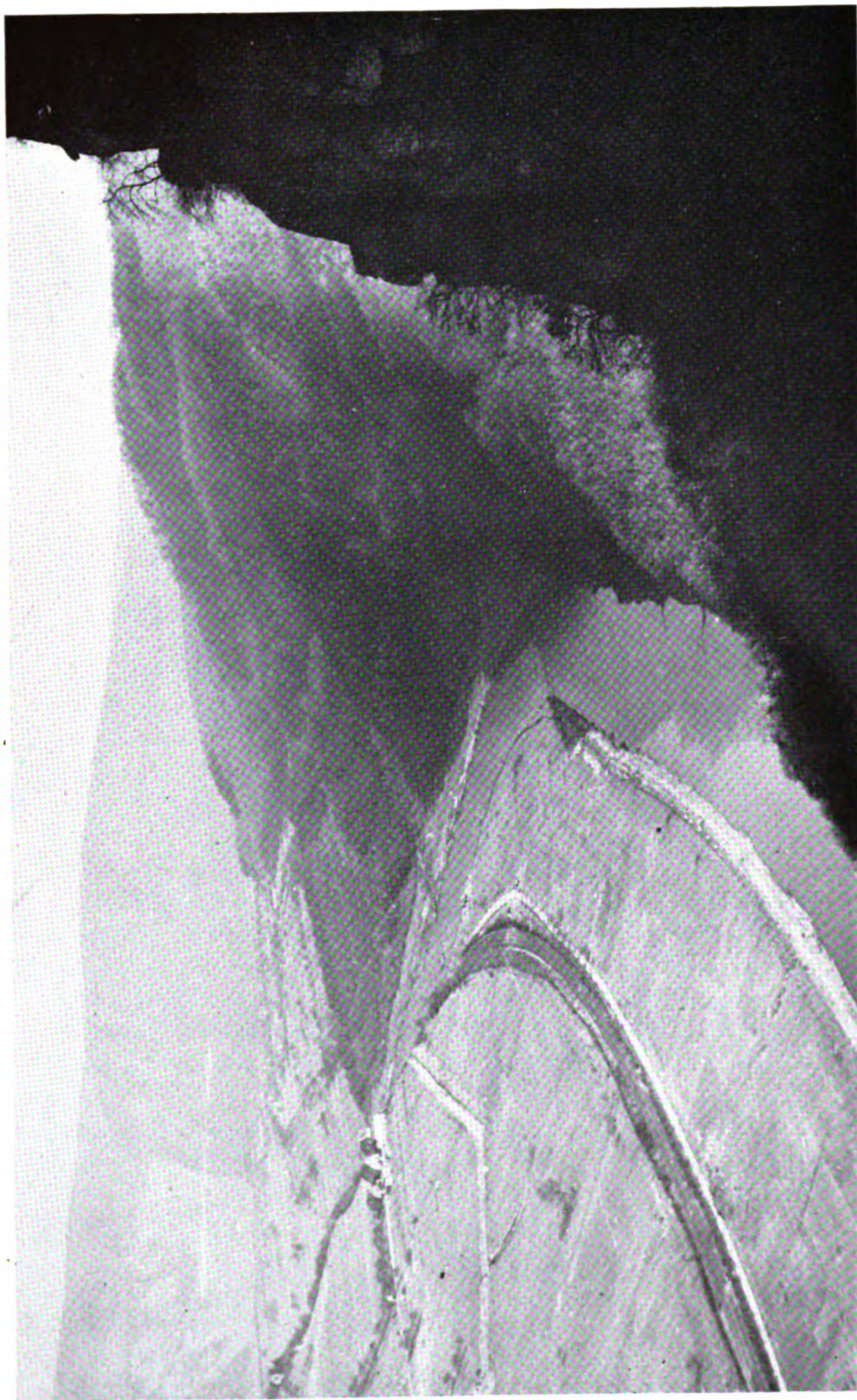
PART FIVE

GERMANY: ACROSS THE SAAR

*Go forward with everything you've got. Speed  
and power . . .*

MAJ. GEN. WALTON H. WALKER  
CG, XX CORPS, FEBRUARY 21, 1945





*The Valley of the Saar, looking upstream from the vicinity of the Staadt crossing. In the distance, upper left, are the cliffs opposite the Hamm Bend which is located in the left center of the picture.*

## Chapter 30: THE BRIDGEHEAD

**D**URING THE AFTERNOON of February 21, 1945, as the spearheads of the Division closed up to the Saar River, feeling among the troops ran high. The drive through the Triangle had been spectacular and the corps commander himself had indicated that with the clearing of this area, the Division would belly-up to the Saar, outpost the river and enjoy a well earned rest. Such was not the case. At about 1400 hours Lieutenant Harold J. Donkers, one of the Division liaison officers, called Division Headquarters in Freudenburg from the Corps CP. "Back here they're talking about a river crossing," Lieutenant Donkers reported, "and if it's made, we'll be making it." Although the idea of an immediate crossing seemed fantastic, General Malony instructed Colonel Bergquist to alert the regimental commanders and Lieutenant Colonel Ellis of the engineers. Preliminary preparations for an assault crossing of the Saar River were to be initiated at once.

Time available for reconnaissance and planning was extremely short. Furthermore, it seemed almost impossible that the necessary materials and supplies for such an operation could be gathered on short notice. As best they could, the various commanders began their preparations for orders they hoped would not be issued. An aerial reconnaissance along the Saar River from Merzig to Trier was ordered by General Fortier, and this assignment fell to Lieutenant George F. Shaw, a liaison pilot of Headquarters & Headquarters Battery, 94th Division Artillery. Colonel Hagerty and Colonel Johnson, meanwhile, dispatched patrols to investigate the west bank of the river for possible crossing sites and likely OPs. The engineers, who had exactly fourteen assault boats on hand, contacted corps to learn what further river-crossing equipment could be supplied.

At 1804 hours Lieutenant Donkers arrived at Division Headquarters with XX Corps Field Order No. 11:

The XX Corps attacks 22 February to exploit their breakthrough, seize Trier, and expand the bridgehead to the line Pfalzel to Hamm and will be prepared to continue the attack to the northeast or north on Army Order . . . The 10th Armored Division (attached 376th Combat Team) attacks to the northeast to seize Trier . . . The 94th Infantry Division attacks across the Saar between Saarburg and Hamm on the night of the 21st-22d of February to establish the line Geizenburg south to the river bend at Hamm, and will be prepared to continue the attack to the northeast on Corps order.

This order also indicated certain attachments to the Division for this operation: the 778th Tank Battalion, less Company C; the 704th TD Battalion, less Company C; the 465th AAA Battalion; the 774th TD



Battalion; and Company C of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion.

There was no longer any doubt. Before dawn the 94th would begin an assault crossing of the Saar River. Meanwhile, there was much to be done. Detailed plans had to be formulated and coordinated, crossing sites selected, infantry and artillery units moved into new positions, additional engineers and river-crossing equipment obtained and brought to the crossing sites. Food, ammunition and gasoline had to be hauled forward from supply installations which, in some instances, had been left forty and more miles to the rear by the rapid advance of the past three days. It was going to be a busy night.

The two hours immediately following the arrival of the corps order were a period of concentrated action in the Division command post. By 2000 hours plans were made and approved and a Division field order formulated. In the G-3 section, the regimental liaison officers, Lieutenant William G. Vincent of the 301st Infantry and Lieutenant Laurence G. Byrnes of the 302d Infantry, received copies of the Division order and rushed them to their respective regiments. There remained only eight hours before the crossing was to begin.

The 301st Infantry was ordered to cross at 0400 hours and establish a bridgehead from Serrig north to a point opposite Krutweiler, continue the advance and gain its assigned portion of the Division's initial objective which was a chain of hills some six thousand yards east of Serrig. Also, the regiment was to maintain contact with the 10th Armored Division on the left and the 302d on the right.

The 302d Infantry was likewise scheduled to cross at 0400 hours. It was to secure a bridgehead from Serrig south to the river bend at Hamm, push to the east and seize that part of the Division's initial objective in its zone. Colonel Johnson's men were charged further with protecting the right flank of the 301st and maintaining contact with the 5th Ranger Battalion to the south, on the west bank of the river.

Earlier in the day, upon the receipt of the alert, Colonel Hagerty had instructed Lieutenant Colonel McNulty, commanding his 3d Battalion, to send a strong reconnaissance patrol to investigate Staadt. At the same time, Colonel Dohs, commanding the 2d Battalion, had been instructed to send a reconnaissance party into Krutweiler. These two towns were the only possible crossing sites within the regimental zone. Through them passed the two roads that led down to the river, from the cliffs and steep hills along the west bank. The regimental I&R Platoon was directed to reconnoiter all roads and trails leading into Krutweiler and, in addition, to locate and man observation posts from which the far bank of the river could be watched and studied.

Prior to the arrival of the Division field order, the I&R Platoon reported that the enemy still held Krutweiler. Contact had been made with the 94th Reconnaissance Troop outside the village and the cavalry reported that the enemy were numerically their superior. A short time later, Lieutenant Colonel Dohs and his reconnaissance party corroborated this information. Thus, it became apparent that if the crossing were to be launched at the time designated, it would have to be made at Staadt; the 3d Battalion, 301st, which was garrisoning both Kastel and Staadt, became the logical choice for the assault operation.

The 302d Infantry was also having difficulty finding a crossing site. A possible location at Hamm was discarded because there was no road leading to the river; moreover, enemy snipers were already emplaced among the rocky heights on the far shore in this vicinity. Farther south, outside the assigned bridgehead area, was the town of Taben and there it was decided the regiment would cross for the road leading into town was good and continued to the river. Below the town, it was winding and steep leading to an old bridge completely demolished by the Germans in their retreat across the Saar. The near bank was found to be only a fair launching area while the east or enemy bank was worse, since it consisted of a twelve-foot, vertical retaining wall on which scaling ladders had been located at various intervals. Immediately beyond the wall, and paralleling the river, were a highway and railroad. Beyond these the terrain rose in a vertical rock cliff some four hundred feet high. This escarpment was crowned by Hocker Hill.

Taben was practically everything that a good crossing site should not be, but it was the only one available to Colonel Johnson. It was free of snipers and in all likelihood the enemy would not expect an American crossing at this point. Further, it was obvious that Hocker Hill, because of its dominating position, would have to be secured if the 302d was to protect the south flank of the proposed bridgehead area. The 1st Battalion, 302d, which was located in Oberleuken, was instructed to cross at Taben at 0400 hours on the morning of the 22d.

Concerning the disposition of enemy forces across the Saar, G-2 could supply little information. No patrols had yet crossed the river, but it was logically assumed that the Germans were confused and disorganized by the Division's drive of the past three days. It was a known fact that the main defenses of the Siegfried Line or Westwall, paralleling the east bank of the Saar, were perfectly sited to cover the river and well constructed. The enemy had observation, prepared fields of fire, ideal artillery positions, underground communications and massive pillboxes, all protected by minefields and wire. The ter-



*The carriage of an American 8-inch rifle which overturned when it detonated several German plastic mines while being moved into position near Oberleuken*

rain on which these fortifications were constructed was rugged and partly forested. Everything necessary for the defense had been provided and the Germans had boasted that the position was impregnable.

Correspondingly, there was a complete lack of information on enemy artillery positions; the 7th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, attached to XX Corps, was too far from the river to obtain accurate plots on the German batteries. Moreover, time for planning and preparation was at a minimum. Lieutenant Colonel John G. Brimmer, Division Artillery S-3, assigned positions for the 301st, 356th and 390th Field Artillery Battalions entirely from a map reconnaissance. (The 919th Field Artillery Battalion was with the 376th Combat Team attached to the 10th Armored Division.) As the battalions rolled toward their assigned positions, forward observers and liaison officers moved to join their infantry units prior to H-hour, which was fast approaching.

To the 5th Field Artillery Group of XX Corps Artillery, was assigned the mission of reinforcing the 94th Division Artillery with its fire power which ranged from 105mms to 155mm guns. The 195th Field Artillery Group, whose weapons ranged up to 240mm howitzers, was to be in general support of both the 94th Division and the 3d Cavalry for the coming operation.

XX Corps Engineers informed the division that the 1139th Engineer Group Headquarters would assist in obtaining crossing equipment and that the 135th Engineer Combat Battalion would give direct support. This sounded like adequate assistance until it was learned that most of Third Army's river crossing equipment had been moved north to the zone of the First and Ninth Armies. There were presently avail-

able only about sixty assault boats and five motorboats. These were to be dispatched to Lieutenant Colonel Ellis at once.

When the corps boats had not arrived in the Division area by 2230 hours, Major Albert R. Hoffman, S-3 of the 319th Engineers, started a search for the promised equipment. Two miles outside of Freudenburg, the boat convoy was located. The drivers of these vehicles had pulled off the road and made themselves comfortable for the night, but it was not long before the major had the trucks rolling again. After some road difficulties and several delays, the sixty-four boats arrived at Freudenburg where the convoy was split and half the assault boats sent to each of the crossing sites.

### TABEN CROSSING

At 2200 hours on the night of the 21st, Major Stanion in Oberleuken received the regimental order directing the 1st Battalion to cross the Saar at 0400 hours the following morning. It was well after dark and there was no opportunity for detailed reconnaissance. Within a short period of time, the battalion commander assembled his troops, loaded them on trucks and started toward the bridge site. Company C, which had been designated to lead the crossing, arrived in Taben first and detrucked. At this time there was little enemy fire falling on the town and from the engineers it was learned that the corps boats had not yet arrived. Time passed—still the necessary river-crossing equipment did not put in an appearance. At about 0500 hours, or one hour after the designated time of crossing, the corps boats arrived at Taben. The leading engineer vehicle was quickly unloaded and six assault boats, each of which weighed one thousand pounds, were started down the steep, twisting road to the river, manhandled by the infantrymen who were to make the assault crossing. In the river valley the fog was as thick as milk. Chemical smoke could not have provided better concealment, but it was noticed that sound traveled extremely well in the damp air. After an hour and five minutes of back-breaking work, the first boat reached the water's edge. The men who had sweated and strained to get it into position were utterly exhausted.

The time consumed in getting these first assault boats into position led Lieutenant Colonel Ellis to make a risky decision. He ordered the drivers of the unloaded boat trucks to cut their motors and coast down hill to a point about three hundred yards from the river bank. This was done and the remainder of the boats was soon at the crossing site. These craft, of wooden construction, flat-bottomed, and about twenty feet long, were each capable of accommodating twelve men plus

their personal equipment. Hence, the normal load for a single boat during the crossing operations was its crew of two engineers and ten infantrymen. Each of the occupants of a boat manned a paddle while one of the engineers steered the craft from the stern.

At the water's edge, the troops discovered it was impossible to see the far bank through the fog. From recent thaws, the river was swollen and turbulent and the rush of the stream tended to cover the little noise made by the men of Company C as they prepared to cross. Staff Sergeant John F. Smith loaded his squad into the first boat along with the engineers who were to man the craft, and at 0650 hours on Washington's Birthday, 1945, the crossing began. The seven-mile-an-hour current made paddling difficult, but the far shore was reached without incident. There, the twelve-foot retaining wall at the water's edge was encountered, but the squad was fortunate in that it found a ladder which the Germans had left in place.

Mounting the ladder, Sergeant Smith's squad gained the top of the wall where they surprised two Germans standing outside a pillbox and took them prisoner. Seven more PWs were taken from this same box without a struggle. By this time, most of the 2d Platoon had arrived and started forward to protect the crossing of the rest of the battalion. The 1st Squad of the 1st Platoon followed and began a search of the area to the left of the landing site. Fifty yards from the first pillbox, a German soldier was spotted walking around a second fortification. He was shot and the squad pushed farther north. Soon the men encountered sniper fire which halted them until they were able to outflank the opposition and push on downstream, where they encountered a third box and took its occupants prisoner. It was then decided to return to the crossing site. En route the four snipers who had been by-passed were rounded up.

Back at the crossing, the squad leader reported to Major Stanion who instructed him to move south next and eliminate any enemy in position to the right of the slender bridgehead. Two hundred and fifty yards up the river, eighteen more prisoners were captured from another pillbox. Sergeant William Wollenberg, who speaks German, took one of the prisoners with him to assist in clearing the other fortifications in the vicinity. The sergeant persuaded his prisoner to call to his comrades, telling them they were surrounded by a force of four hundred fully armed Americans. This ruse netted another forty-seven Germans. Private First Class James Stephenson was left to guard these prisoners while the rest of the squad continued up the river. Several more pillboxes were located and searched.

To reinforce the bridgehead with their HMGs, the 1st Platoon of Company D followed the rifle platoons of the assault company. In turn, they were followed by Companies A and B each of which had a section of machine guns from the 2d Platoon of Company D attached. Enemy resistance consisted exclusively of sporadic sniper fire. The only mishap in the operation occurred when one of the assault boats capsized and four men were drowned.

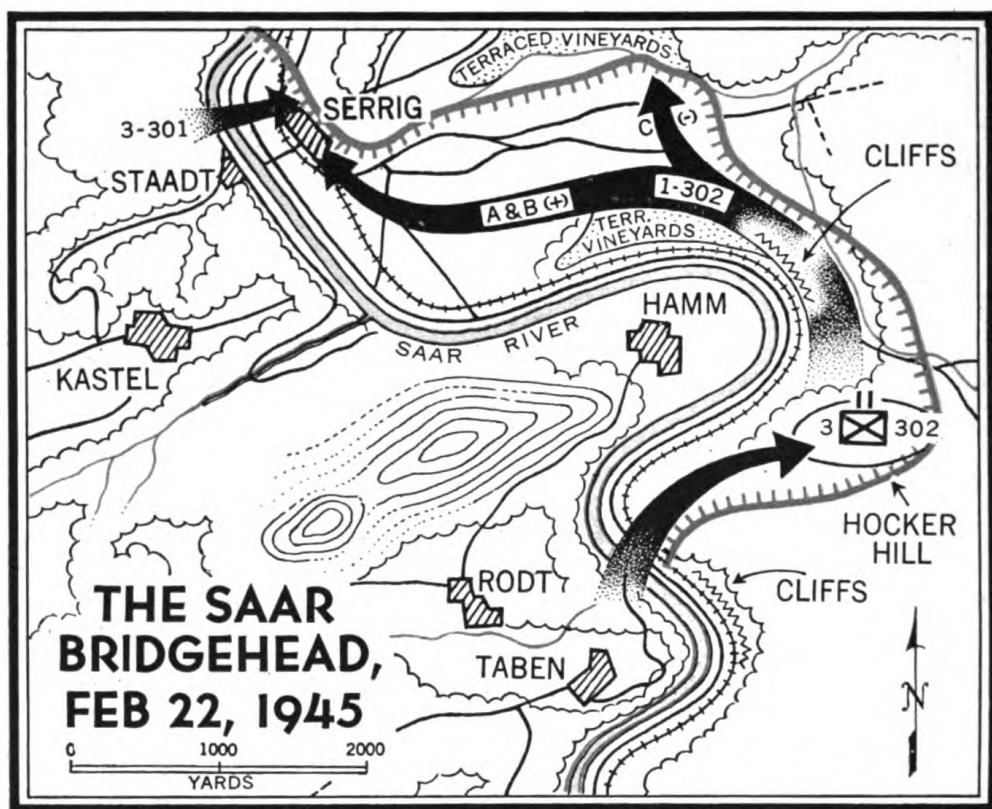
Major Stanion's plan of advance called for Companies A and B to pass through Lieutenant Robinson's men, who had scaled and captured the sheer heights of Hocker Hill, move down stream and secure the battalion's assigned objectives in the town of Serrig. Upon being passed through, Company C was to bring up the rear of the battalion column. Prior to the jump-off of the leading companies, Lieutenant Robinson sent a patrol down the trail that led from west of the summit of Hocker Hill to the road into Serrig. The patrol encountered no Germans and after proceeding a short distance it returned. About noon Companies A and B moved out as planned.

At the point where the above-mentioned trail joined the road into Serrig, the Germans had built a pillbox in the semblance of a small brick house. To the left, the terrain fell away sharply to the river far below, while to the right, the ground rose still higher. Company A, in the lead and marching in single file, passed this point unopposed. As Company B reached the junction, enemy bunkers to the east opened fire. However, by using infiltration tactics the company passed the danger area. With the arrival of Company C, this enemy fire increased in intensity.

Lieutenant Richards took a squad of the 3d Platoon up the hill to silence some snipers who were engaging the company; at the same time Technical Sergeant James Cousineau was instructed by radio to lead the 1st Platoon over Hocker Hill and outflank the enemy positions. This maneuver proved successful, for the enemy withdrew as Sergeant Cousineau's men advanced against their left flank. En route, the 1st Platoon seized three unmanned artillery pieces of small caliber on the trail that crossed the summit of Hocker Hill.

While this was taking place, Companies A and B were moving westward along the heights above the river. To their front, across the open ground in the valley, was Serrig. It was planned that Companies A and B should attack the town while Company C held the high ground to the east.

With Company A as they prepared for this attack toward Serrig was Captain Bruhl of the 356th Field Artillery. When a group of



about one hundred Germans were observed some nine hundred yards from the company, in the valley below, the captain adjusted artillery fire while the company's machine guns opened up. Practically all of the enemy troops were either killed or wounded in the ensuing carnage. The push toward Serrig was then begun and continued without interruption until fire was received from a small orchard outside the town. Marching fire was employed and the company overran this position. In it they found twenty-seven dead Germans.

On the left, Company B, to which had been attached a platoon of Company C, was having trouble with some pillboxes in the vicinity of the railroad tracks. After capturing three of these fortifications, further advance was stalled by heavy machine-gun fire until the German guns were flanked. The forward movement of the company then continued and more pillboxes were taken. As the company pushed on, Captain Wancio left some of his men to garrison these positions. By 1900 hours the troops had entered town, led through a series of minefields by two liberated Russian slave laborers. To the right, Company A had also entered Serrig and it was known from radio reports that elements of the 3d Battalion, 301st, were on the northern portion of the objective. However, during the night no contact was made be-



tween the two battalions. Meanwhile, Company C of Major Stanion's battalion, less one platoon, was emplaced on the high ground east of town. Just after dark, the 3d Platoon of this company repulsed a violent enemy counterattack. The night then passed quietly, but with the coming of dawn there was another German assault which was driven back only after an hour of sharp fighting.

Because of the fluid situation existing during the night of the 22d and the morning of the 23d, it became impossible for the artillery to learn definitely the front line positions of both battalions. Fearing that fire missions requested by one of the infantry battalions might land upon the other, Lieutenant Colonel Brimmer established a "No Fire Line" east of Serrig. The infantrymen then proceeded with their task of clearing Serrig without artillery support or assistance from the tanks and TDs which had assumed positions on the ridge south of Staadt, on the west bank of the Saar.

While the initial battalions of the 301st and 302d were crossing at Taben and Staadt, other elements of the Division were busy completing former assignments or preparing to follow the assault units into the newly won bridgehead areas. Along the river, in the towns of Taben, Rodt and Hamm, the men of the 3d Battalion, 302d, had watched and heard the troops of the 1st Battalion move down to the Saar. The fog and later the smoke prevented their observing the actual crossing, but they knew by the small volume of fire directed against Major Stanion's men that things were going fairly well and that soon they would be moving to the crossing site.

At about noon, elements of the 5th Ranger Battalion relieved Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men and an hour later the battalion assembled in Taben. Enemy artillery fire on the town had increased in intensity and some machine-gun fire was being received from the cliffs across the river. However, it was still little more than harassing fire. This continued throughout the afternoon.

With Company L leading, the 3d Battalion began its crossing. The boat carrying the mortar section of Company K capsized and all its equipment was lost. By 2200 hours all elements of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's command had crossed the river and started the long haul to the top of Hocker Hill. The cliff was almost sheer and climbing the steep trails that led up its face was exhausting work. Once they had gained the summit, the three rifle companies organized a perimeter defense.



**Top: A disabled German antitank gun in Saarburg. Bottom: Saarburg on the Saar.**

Early on the morning of the 22d the 94th Reconnaissance Troop had been assigned the task of entering Saarburg to clear the town of snipers. The 1st Platoon, led by Lieutenant Jack J. Hubbell, accomplished this mission with little difficulty. At the same time, the other platoons of the troop cleared the woods and the pillboxes outside of town.

The same morning, the 1st Battalion, 301st, moved by truck from Orsholz to Trassem, preparatory to crossing the river at Staadt. The 2d Battalion, 302d, in Keuchingen, was alerted to follow Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men across the Saar at Taben. Once over the river, it would be their task to clear completely the river road leading into Serrig and the cliffs paralleling it which were harboring many snipers.

#### STAADT CROSSING

Shortly after midnight on the 21st, it became evident that the 301st Infantry was going to have trouble making its crossing at 0400 hours. Since the Company I patrol dispatched at 1500 hours had not returned, Lieutenant Colonel McNulty organized a second patrol and accompanied it to Staadt. It was decided to leave the battalion in Kastel until the arrival of the assault boats which would have to pass through the town en route to Staadt. Once the engineer convoy had cleared Kastel, the battalion would start down to the river and, immediately upon the arrival of the leading elements, initiate the crossing. Companies I and K were to cross abreast of each other, in an attempt to surprise the enemy and quickly capture the numerous pillboxes on the flat, open east bank.

At 0500 hours a motor convoy was heard approaching Kastel, and the battalion staff breathed a sigh of relief. Unfortunately, it was not the long-awaited assault boats. One of the battalion motor trains of the 302d Infantry had taken the wrong road out of Freudenburg. There was no turn-about in town, so each of the vehicles had to be wheeled around on the narrow main street and returned over the route by which the column had entered town. As this was taking place, the engineer convoy arrived and their passage through town was blocked by the battalion train. Finally, the assault-boat convoy worked past the infantry trucks; in the process, one of the engineer trailers ditched and over-turned. As a result, it was 0615 hours before the trucks carrying the assault boats cleared the town and the foot troops were on their way to Staadt.

As the companies arrived at the crossing site, boats were unloaded and carried toward the river bank. When all seemed ready, it was





*Camouflaged pillbox in the vicinity of Serrig*

discovered that Companies I and K had been reversed in the darkness. In addition, the loss of the trailerload of boats in Kastel imposed a shortage of assault craft. Therefore, the battalion commander modified his plan. The battalion would cross in a column of companies; Company I in the van.

In moving their boats down the last few yards to the river's edge, the leading company alerted the enemy. Machine-gun fire whipped across the river and the men hit the dirt. Once this fire lifted, it took some time to get the advance started again. Boats were then rushed to the water's edge and the assault troops piled into them. As they pulled away into the turbulent river, the American artillery let go with their prearranged fires. The mortars of Companies H and M in Kastel added the weight of their support, and the HMGs of the 3d Battalion along the road paralleling the river opened fire. These automatic weapons fired blindly into the heavy fog, hoping to keep the enemy down while the boats of the assault wave were battling their way across the swollen stream.

By 0750 hours, after many difficulties, Company I was across. The swift current and the inexperience of most of the troops in handling assault craft scattered the company irregularly along a wide frontage on the enemy side of the Saar. Many of the boats encountered low wire entanglements at the water's edge and the main barbed-wire obstacles were too close to the river to permit the safe use of bangalore torpedoes. The wire was cut by hand and while this work was in progress, the area was raked by fire from enemy pillboxes along the river front. Only the dense fog saved the situation. Enemy observation was limited to a matter of feet and the German gunners had to content themselves with searching the area with fire. Meanwhile, the



*A pillbox equipped with metal flaps to conceal its firing ports*

engineers manning the assault craft had started back to the west bank of the river for the second wave. Several of the undermanned craft were swept down stream and around the bend to the north. Machine-gun fire was heard and these boats were never seen again.

In this area the Germans had constructed many of their pillboxes to resemble houses and barns. It was impossible, even after the fog lifted, to determine the innocent buildings from the deadly, except by minute scrutiny. Many of the firing apertures on the camouflaged pillboxes were covered with steel flaps which concealed the tell-tale firing ports. Constant exposure to the weather had rusted the hinges of many of these flaps and they squeaked when opened. The assault troops learned quickly that a metallic squeak was an invitation to hit the dirt.

Upon landing Captain Donovan, commanding Company I, accompanied by a small group of men, moved along the beach attempting to locate other elements of the scattered company. En route, they encountered a breach in the enemy wire entanglements which had been marked with toilet paper by the men who cut the gap. Through this the company commander and his group passed, working their way to the right toward the old ferry and bridge site where they encountered a minefield. Through this they cleared and marked a lane. Toilet paper was again used as it stood out more clearly than engineer tape. The group then pushed forward; as the scouts approached the embankment of the road, they were fired upon by two German riflemen.

The BAR man with the group pinned down the enemy while the scouts closed in for the kill.

This American fire attracted attention and several enemy machine guns began to search the area. The company commander and his party, which numbered only fifteen men, moved back to the river's edge passing under the abutments of the old bridge. Taking advantage of the cover of an embankment and a ditch, the party then worked forward toward the first few houses in Serrig.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the company was spread up and down the east bank of the river, in groups of one- and two-boat loads. At the northern edge of Serrig, a group about the size of a squad had taken shelter in an antitank ditch. Further advance was hindered by enemy fire until Private First Class Robert L. Chapman leaped from the ditch with his BAR blazing and charged a pillbox facing the AT ditch. He worked his way to the rear of the box and there took his first prisoner. With a little persuasion, this German talked the other occupants of the box into surrendering. Then the rest of the squad was brought forward and prepared to defend the pillbox.

As time passed and the rest of the company failed to advance, the enemy began to close in on three sides of the newly won position. Fearing capture, the squad elected to return to the antitank ditch. Covered by the fire of Private First Class Chapman's BAR, the group rushed for the ditch and made it safely. As Chapman moved to join them, a grenade was thrown by one of two Germans who had worked into position to flank the BAR man. Concussion blew Chapman into the ditch, after which the enemy riflemen rushed forward wounding him in the shoulder. Chapman killed both of the Germans, then took position on the edge of the ditch until the squad had re-organized.

At Staadt, on the west bank of the Saar, the situation was also far from desirable. Of the sixteen boats that made the first crossing only six returned and none of these had sufficient paddles. It was later discovered that in the excitement of landing many of the inexperienced troops had carried their paddles ashore with them. Captain Horner of the 319th Engineers sent a detail to salvage the boats and paddles on the overturned trailer in Kastel and dispatched an urgent request for outboard-motor boats to speed crossing operations. At 0825 hours, word was received that the motors were on the way.

Although the enemy could not see the crossing site through the fog, he sprayed the general area with incessant machine-gun fire. Snipers who had been bypassed the previous day in the rugged terrain on the American side of the river, soon began harassing the steep road from

Kastel to Staadt and a patrol from Company L was dispatched to clear them out. By 0930 hours, German artillery and mortar fire began to land on Staadt and this added to the confusion.

As the sun's rays fell into the valley, the fog dispelled and enemy observation improved. To counteract this, Company B of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion dropped white phosphorus shells across the river to screen the vision of the German gunners and OPs. Smoke pots were also brought forward and ignited.

The mortar and artillery fire, which at first had been sporadic, began to quicken. It increased in tempo and some of the few remaining assault boats were hit; because of the shortage of craft, it was impossible to send Company K over in a single wave. At 1140 hours, the 1st and 3d Platoons were loaded and moved across the Saar with instructions to contact Captain Donovan at the old bridge site. A terrific artillery concentration sank two of the boats and punctured several more. By noon when the outboard motors arrived there was only one of the original assault boats still undamaged.

When the storm boats and their 22-horsepower motors were unloaded, spirits began to rise. With the outboards it would be possible to quickly negotiate the river and deploy the rest of the battalion on the east bank. As the motors were unpacked, it was discovered they were new and had never been serviced. Hastily the engineers began this task, but the noise drew additional and more accurate enemy fire. Two of the storm boats and three of the operators were hit. Following this, the servicing of the motors was continued in the basements of nearby buildings where the outboards were tested in barrels of water. Since there were no replacements available for the wounded boat operators, it became necessary to draft inexperienced men to take over their jobs. While this was going on additional assault boats arrived.

At 1455 hours, the remainder of Company K, commanded by Captain Warren, embarked and crossed the river. Lieutenant Colonel McNulty, accompanied by his artillery liaison officer, Captain Donald M. Aschermann; a Cannon Company observer, Lieutenant Rodney A. Goodling; the CO of Company M, Captain Emanuel P. Snyder; radio operators and runners, crossed with Captain Warren.

On the far shore as Lieutenant Colonel McNulty and his party approached the bridge site, they found Captain Donovan waiting to lead them forward to the shelter of the first few houses which had been taken in Serrig. Most of Company K was concentrated in the immediate area and constituted a large enough force to start pushing into the town proper. However, before the advance could begin it



was necessary to eliminate some of the enemy machine guns whose fire was whipping down the streets and between the buildings. To locate these guns, Lieutenant Colonel McNulty decided it would be necessary to lift the smoke screening the crossing. This was done and the infantrymen had their first good look at the defenses of the main Siegfried Line.

As the smoke lifted the Germans gained unobstructed observation of the crossing site. The boats along the river's edge were accurately engaged by the enemy's artillery and automatic weapons. A radio jeep which was parked on the main street in Staadt was ripped and riddled by a ten-minute machine-gun concentration and a 20mm gun on the high ground east of Serrig blasted away at the hotel that was being used as a command post and general assembly area. This fire made it suicidal for the occupants of this building to step out of doors. Attempts were made to move forward a tank destroyer to engage these enemy weapons, but each time the motor was started the Germans threw over a terrific artillery concentration. At 1700 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Hardin, the executive officer, was wounded by a shell fragment from a round that landed in the doorway of the hotel and had to be evacuated. It became obvious that any further attempt at crossing the river before the coming of darkness would prove abortive. Activity at the river was therefore halted and when darkness settled on the valley, the terrible intensity of the enemy fire began to slacken. But, even after nightfall, any noise in the vicinity of the crossing site brought instant and accurate reaction from the German batteries.

Across the river, Companies I and K proceeded with the task of clearing the northern portion of Serrig; Company L crossed early in the evening with only minor casualties. As the moon rose, a steady volume of well directed small-arms fire was employed against all companies. Request was made for smoke, and because it was not known exactly how far the 1st Battalion, 302d, had penetrated into town, the Chemical Mortar Company decided to place their white phosphorus rounds between the railroad tracks and the river. This would provide the desired smoke without endangering either of the attacking forces.

For the battalion the day had been one of close, hard fighting. On one occasion, Captain Donovan, his radio operator, Private First Class Early Corey and Private First Class Carl M. Flaherty formed a bazooka team to knock out a German machine gun holding up the advance. Late in the afternoon when ammunition began to run low it became

necessary to collect rounds from the wounded. Three radio operators in Company I were hit during the day, but miraculously the radio escaped unharmed. One of the mortar observers had the sight shot off his M1 by a German in the next building, while a machine gunner from Company M had a box of ammunition disintegrate in his hand as it was hit by a burst of enemy fire.

It had taken all day and most of the night to get the battalion across the Saar and punch a hole through the outer crust of the Siegfried Line. But, by 0400 hours on the 23d the river front had been cleared, nineteen houses in Serrig taken and the battalion was pushing south.

Technician Fifth Grade Petri of Company K, who speaks fairly good German, found a resident of Serrig among the prisoners taken during the day who professed to know the location of all pillboxes in the vicinity. Using a telephone in one of the captured pillboxes, he made contact with an occupied bunker and arranged for its surrender. The agreement was for both parties to meet midway between the respective boxes. Corporal Petri, his squad and the prisoner took off for the rendezvous. They arrived at the designated point where they waited for quite some time. When a surrender party from the enemy box failed to appear, it was then decided to proceed to the German-held bunker. As the Americans approached this position, a machine gun opened fire. Corporal Petri had his bazooka team near the head of the squad and immediately it engaged the pillbox. This first round killed the German gunner and destroyed his weapon. The remaining men in the bunker then surrendered. Encouraged by this success, the squad repeated the operation. By daylight eleven pillboxes had been cleared and 247 prisoners taken.

Private First Class Thomas A. Sudberry, a medic, made the crossing with Company K. As soon as his boat hit the far shore, he dashed across the fire-swept beach and worked forward to help some of Company I's wounded. Thirty minutes later he returned to assist the casualties inflicted on Companies K and M at the edge of the river. While working on one of the wounded, a shell burst not more than ten yards away. One man was killed and Private First Class Sudberry and five others were wounded. With shrapnel in both legs and scarcely able to move, the aid man refused to be evacuated. He moved about the area administering to the wounded until about nightfall when his supplies gave out. The following morning more medical supplies arrived, but Private First Class Sudberry's legs had stiffened and he could no longer walk. He persuaded two men to carry him around the

beachhead and continued to administer first aid and plasma until additional medics were brought across the river.

A statement made by a German officer, Lieutenant Colonel Albrecht Roeschen, subsequent to his capture in Trier is quoted in part below:

The defenses were far from completely occupied when the 301st and 302d Infantry struck across the Saar. The river and hills were blanketed under a thick morning fog which hung on the river till nearly 1000. Artillery and mortar concentrations thundered down on Serrig, the noise echoing around the hills many times magnified by the fog. Men in the pillboxes seemed so isolated, unable to see anything or know what was going on. Then the men in Serrig could hear the splashing of paddles and voices out on the river and the sputter of an outboard engine. Nervously they opened up, firing wildly at the sounds, hoping they could hit what they couldn't see. At Taben the first indication of the American attack were men banging on the doors of the pillboxes and the sight of a long file of men struggling up the hill and across the plateau west of Hocker Hill. No one could have expected that the Americans would attack across this steep country, but they did. By afternoon the Germans in Serrig who had lost some houses west of the railroad tracks to the attack of the 3d Battalion, 301st Infantry, were dazed by the sight of Americans attacking down the hill from the east, from their rear. The 1st Battalion, 302d, swept down into Serrig, seizing part of the town, before dark slowed down the operations. At Ayl the defenders were amazed at mid-afternoon to see the 376th Infantry advance across the open meadows toward the river and push their boats out into the water in the very face of artillery and mortar fire adjusted from the hilltops and machine-gun fire from the pillboxes along the base of the hill. If there was any doubt about the American intention to cross the river, it was dissipated by dark. They were coming across in force. The main crossing site seemed to be at Serrig, Taben, and Ayl. At Serrig the 94th Division had a foothold, but the crossing site was dominated by the observation on the hills around the town. The Ayl crossing had been repulsed, but the crossing at Taben, deep down in the river gorge, couldn't be reached by flat-trajectory weapons. The best that could be done was to try to interdict and harass the road leading to the crossing.

On the 22d some reinforcements were becoming available. General Pflieger had been given command of the elements of the 11th Panzer Division, which had not yet entrained for another sector; *i.e.*, the II Battalion of the 111th Panzer Grenadiers. This unit he pushed into an attack to seize and hold the critical defile between Taben and Serrig through which the 1st Battalion, 302d, had attacked.

## *Chapter 31: THE SECOND DAY*

**B**Y 0655 HOURS on the morning of the 23d, the 2d Battalion, 302d, was completely across the Saar. Movement had begun shortly after midnight and was harassed only by occasional artillery fire which caused little damage. As elements of Company E reached the far side of the river and scaled the retaining wall, they ran into a twelve-man German patrol which had slipped through the beachhead defenses in the darkness. The enemy seemed as completely surprised as the Americans they encountered, and a small fire fight developed which resulted in a speedy surrender by the Germans. Following this, a thorough search of the area was made and the perimeter strengthened. Crossing operations were soon back in full swing and the remainder of the battalion was brought across without further interruption.

To accomplish the battalion's mission of clearing the river road, it was necessary to eliminate those enemy forces emplaced in the rugged cliffs paralleling the road and river. Major Maixner decided to scale these heights and move the battalion along the ridge road. A strong patrol was to be left at the base of the escarpment, to move up the river road abreast of the remainder of the battalion above. The former group would take care of any resistance that might be found from the base of the cliffs to the river's edge.

Such a patrol started downstream toward Serrig, moving forward slowly. The men checked the numerous pillboxes embedded beneath the railroad tracks which paralleled the river road at a slightly higher level. Most of these were empty and the patrol advanced to the south side of the hairpin bend opposite Hamm. Here, late in the afternoon, they met a party from the 1st Battalion, 302d, which had worked its way upstream from Serrig. The road was clear of enemy and the only obstacle to the passage of wheeled vehicles was a huge crater in the vicinity of the Hamm bend. Once this had been filled by the engineers the road would be passable.

Meanwhile, the rest of the battalion had moved up Hocker Hill and along a trail behind it, to a point on the ridge road approaching the vineyards which terraced the cliff opposite Hamm. Suddenly, Company F, which was leading the battalion, was hit by a hail of machine-gun fire which forced the advance elements to fall back to better cover. Several attempts were made to renew the advance but these were stopped cold. With each successive thrust, the fire of the machine gunners and riflemen of the II Battalion of the 111th Panzergrenadiers, emplaced in the cliff on the north side of the hairpin turn, increased in intensity and accuracy.

Obviously, the battalion had hit a bottle-neck. On the left of the road, the terrain fell away in an almost vertical cliff some four hundred feet to the Saar River. To the right was another almost vertical cliff which rose to terminate in an overhanging ledge. Looking straight down the road to the positions now held by the enemy, the terrain was completely exposed and swept by fire from the rocky cliffs on the northern side of the bend. There was no room for maneuver. Attempts to push forward along the rock wall on the right of the road were stalled by volleys of grenades which the Germans dropped from above. A wire-mesh fence along the left of the road provided the enemy above with a perfect backboard for bouncing grenades under the overhanging ledge. Fortunately, the Germans seemed to possess only concussion grenades. Potato-mashers, employed in the same way, would have made the position absolutely untenable.

In short order, the enemy on the heights learned that the rest of the 2d Battalion was stretched along the road behind Company F. As there was no overhanging ledge topping the cliff above the other companies, the Germans employed their mortars. Enemy shells bursting up and down the road tightened the bottleneck. Frantically the troops attempted to dig in among the rocks. One of the HMGs of Company H went into action on a small ledge to the left of the road and the gunner sprayed the cliff on the far side of the hairpin bend in an effort to neutralize some of the fire being directed against the battalion. Time and again enemy mortar barrages were thrown over the hill in an effort to knock out this weapon. The gun remained in action, but throughout the day the battalion was unable to advance. With the coming of darkness, patrols were sent forward to attempt to break the stalemate. All were unsuccessful. Unknown to Major Maixner and his staff, German troops had been pouring into this area for the past twenty-four hours.

In Serrig the 3d Battalion, 301st, had cleared the area between the railroad and the river, after fighting most of the night. Patrols were then sent to contact the 1st Battalion, 302d, which held most of the town. The first 302d man encountered was Chaplain Harrison, and soon thereafter, Lieutenant Colonel McNulty and Major Stanion were comparing notes and making plans for the continuation of the assault. House by house, the town was searched methodically and the enemy snipers eliminated. Constant artillery and mortar fire fell on the two battalions, but by 1820 hours the town was cleared. Both battalions then assumed defensive positions for the night.

At the Staadt crossing, the operation was progressing not too favorably. The previous night the site had been cleared of enemy small-arms fire, but artillery fire increased in intensity throughout the day until it became more deadly than the direct fire had been. Company C of the 319th Engineers replaced Company A and stretched a rope across the river to facilitate ferrying. As the first boatload of men attempted to haul their craft to the far shore by means of this rope, it parted. The back-breaking job of paddling across the stream was resumed.

In an attempt to cross the 2d Battalion before daylight, Colonel Hagerty had issued orders to revert to the use of the storm boats and take the resulting casualties. Mortar boats moved the first two platoons of Company G to the far shore before the Germans were able to react; but, soon mortar and artillery fire was pouring into the area. By comparison, the concentrations of the previous day seem light. Throughout the latter hours of darkness and the early morning, the 2d Battalion and the engineers took heavy losses.

Shortly after daylight crossing operations had all but reached a standstill and Lieutenant Colonel Dohs came forward personally to take charge. As the boats were about to push into the stream again, a tremendous concentration hit the launching site. Casualties were extremely heavy. The battalion commander was killed instantly by an almost direct hit from one of the enemy shells. Captain Sinclair of Company F, who was forward on reconnaissance, was hit and mortally wounded. Just before he died, he remarked calmly: "It took a big one to get me." Captain Flanagan, battalion S-3, was knocked out by concussion and had to be evacuated. On the beach, many of the battalion and the engineers lay wounded, dead and dying. Not one of the boats had escaped the weight of the murderous barrage, and more assault craft had to be obtained before there could be any continuation of the operation.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest problems of the engineers during this period was the supply of assault boats. The enemy shot up boats almost as quickly as they were brought forward. Better than two hundred were used during the entire operation and by the time the infantry elements were across the Saar, there were only twenty-seven craft still in operation.

Major George W. Brumley, regimental S-3, was given command of the 2d Battalion following the loss of Lieutenant Colonel Dohs. He arrived in Staadt at 1100 hours and by that time a limited number of additional assault boats had been obtained. Fifty minutes later, the



*Saarfels Castle in Serrig. Left to right: Lieutenant Colonel William A. McNulty, Colonel Roy N. Hagerty, and Major William A. Royall.*

next boat was sent across. It was loaded with medical supplies, blankets and radio batteries, all of which were urgently needed by the 3d Battalion on the far side. When this craft made the round trip safely, Major Brumley decided to attempt crossing the remainder of the 2d Battalion. Before this decision could be translated into action, orders were received from higher headquarters to terminate crossing operations. The battalion was to move back to Freudenburg where it would become Division reserve. Later, Major Brumley's men would cross at Taben.

As ordered the battalion withdrew. Moving back to Kastel, it was shelled by the German artillery batteries, but the effects of the enemy fire were not too severe. By darkness, fire on the abandoned crossing site had practically ceased. Considering this, it was decided to keep a motor ferry in operation at Staadt to accomplish the resupply of Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's men who during the previous two days had received only the one boatload of medical items and some ammunition which had been dropped by liaison planes. Neither food nor drink was a major problem as the German civilians, in their hasty withdrawal, left ample stocks of victuals in their kitchens, pantries





*The CO of the 301st Infantry inspects some of the fifty thousand bottles of champagne in the cellar of his CP at Serrig. Unfortunately, most of the wine was still green.*

and cellars. Captured pillboxes were also found to contain stocks of food. Schloss Saarfels, the large castle on the hill in Serrig, was captured by Company I, which found its cellars well stocked with wines and champagne. Of the latter alone, there were thousands of bottles.

By 1930 hours all the wounded on the far side of the river had been evacuated and supplies were moving over in a steady stream. Shortly thereafter, attempts were made to string a wire line across the river. This line stayed in and for the first time in forty-eight hours there was telephone communication between the 3d Battalion and regiment. The battalion aid station, the battalion Antitank Platoon and the regimental Antitank Company were alerted for movement at this site during the night of the 23d, for the Germans were now paying little heed to the Stadt area.

After dark this same night, a platoon of Company K moved from the vicinity of Schloss Saarfels down the ridge to a group of buildings, which turned out to be the winery of the castle. These buildings were secured and the platoon remained in position until daylight. Early on the 24th, a large opening leading into a hillside, along the route used by the platoon the previous evening, was noticed and movement was

observed in the vicinity of this aperture. Soon the figures were positively identified as German soldiers. Deduction was that the rear entrance to a pillbox had been discovered. The men of the platoon crawled down a ditch to a sand pit on the side of the road opposite this opening. Here the platoon assembled while a bazooka team went into position to cover their further advance. In the attack which followed, the enemy was completely surprised and quickly surrendered. Fifty-four enlisted men and three officers were taken from the position, which proved to be the German artillery fire-direction center for the Serrig area.

Because of the difficulties which the 301st Infantry had experienced from the very outset at Staadt and the comparative ease with which the 302d was crossing at Taben, at 0900 hours on the morning of the 23d, Colonel Hagerty had recommended that his 1st Battalion be attached to Colonel Johnson's command. This was approved. Although the enemy fire in the vicinity of the 302d's crossing increased with the coming of daylight most of the artillery fire was directed against the town of Taben and a point on the river bank several hundred yards from where the crossing was being made. For the most part, the heights of Hocker Hill protected Colonel Johnson's crossing from enemy fire.

Major Hodges, commanding the 1st Battalion, 301st, reported to the 302d CP in Taben and was instructed to cross as soon as possible. On gaining the far shore, he was to report to Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis, the regimental executive officer, for definite orders. Instructions were so phrased because it was estimated it would take at least six hours to move the battalion to Taben and complete crossing. By this time, it would be impossible to say what the situation on the east shore might be, and the executive officer of the 302d, who was on the spot, would be better able to issue specific orders for the employment of the attached unit.

While Major McBride, executive officer of the 1st Battalion, 301st, brought the command forward from Trassem by motor, Major Hodges crossed the Saar to contact Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis. The order of crossing was indicated as: Companies B, A and C, with a heavy-machine-gun platoon attached to the two leading companies. These units detrucked west of Taben and proceeded to the crossing over a concealed route. Company A missed the road guide in town and, on the sharp bend leading down to the river, was halted by enemy machine-gun fire from the high ground above Saarhausen. Lieutenant

Wolf, who was leading the column, sent Staff Sergeant John T. Szymanski and Technician Fifth Grade John Lewis to the graveyard south of the road in an attempt to neutralize the enemy fire. However, the German position was too cleverly concealed for the two men to pick up its location. About this time, Lieutenant Wolf was wounded by the explosion of an 88, fired against an ambulance coming up from the river. Both this ambulance and an engineer truck which was following were then brought under fire by the German machine gun and the driver of the truck wounded. Following this, the company pulled back into Taben from whence it proceeded to the river over the trail used by the rest of the battalion.

At the river, Major McBride consulted with Major Hoffman of the engineers who was using all available assault boats for the construction of a footbridge. To hasten this operation, Company B helped the engineers move the boats into position. At 1730 hours work was completed and the companies started across. The ammunition bearers of the mortar platoon were used to carry extra machine-gun ammunition and remained with the HMGs to act as a security force.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis had decided to relieve the 3d Battalion, 302d, holding the defenses of Hocker Hill, with the incoming battalion after dark that night. In the interval, Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men were to attack north reducing a series of pill-boxes included in the regimental objective. As planned, the relief by Major Hodges troops was completed on the night of the 23d. Coming down from Hocker Hill, the 3d Battalion, 302d moved north toward Serrig via the river road.

The same evening the 5th Ranger Battalion was relieved of its patrol mission along the west bank of the Saar and ordered across the river at 1800 hours. Once across, Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan was to move forward and establish a roadblock across the Saarburg-Irsch-Zerf road. Without incident the Rangers crossed and climbed Hocker Hill. From here they headed off into the night on a ten-degree azimuth to accomplish their mission, deep in enemy-held territory. To replace this battalion on the west bank of the Saar, the 3d Battalion of the 101st Infantry Regiment, 26th Infantry Division, was attached to the 94th.

On the morning of the 23d the 94th Reconnaissance Troop was assigned the mission of clearing Krutweiler on the west side of the river. Company B of the 778th Tank Battalion and a platoon of Com-

pany B of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion were attached for the operation. To secure the town, Captain Ashton decided to use his 1st and 3d Platoons while the remaining platoon of the troop was to occupy it once it had been captured. At 1600 hours the assault units moved to the attack, following a preparation by the 4.2-inch chemical mortars. Forty-five minutes later, after passing through an antipersonnel minefield, the troops took the town with little difficulty. During the operation a good deal of enemy fire was placed on Krutweiler from German positions across the Saar.

Throughout the day, the artillery experienced extreme difficulty in executing counterbattery fire. Repeatedly, infantry elements would report incoming mail and request that the enemy guns be neutralized without supplying the artillerymen with accurate fixes on the German batteries. As the day wore on, liaison planes spotted more and more of the enemy gun locations and the artillery brought its weight to bear. Enemy rocket batteries, which were highly mobile, caused a good deal of trouble. They moved frequently, making it difficult for the Division Artillery to catch them with their trails down.

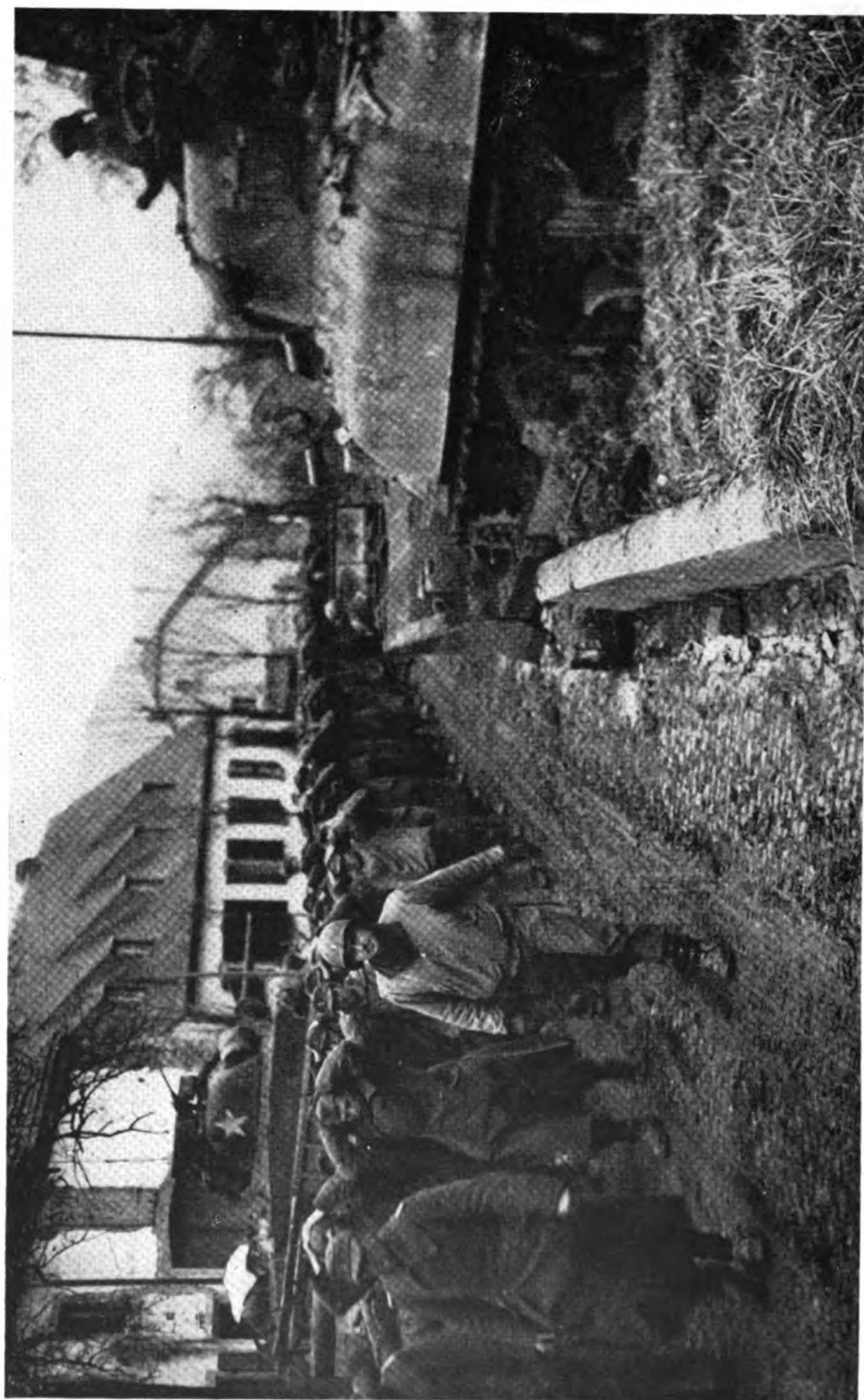
## Chapter 32: THE THIRD DAY

THE 2D BATTALION, 301st, which had been withdrawn from the Staadt crossing and designated Division reserve on the afternoon of the 23d, began movement to the Taben crossing at 0300 hours the following day. The remnants of Companies F and G were joined and placed under the command of Captain Otto P. Steinen. For the rest of the operation, they were referred to as Captain Steinen's Company. This composite unit, numbering in all about seventy men, led the way to the river, followed by Company E which was reduced to approximately fifty effectives. Prior to the crossing, the HMG platoons of Company H were attached to the two rifle companies. Moving to the bridge site, some of the men of this battalion passed out from sheer exhaustion and had to be evacuated; in Rodt, the medics of the 5th Ranger Battalion insisted that Captain Stokstad, commanding Company E, be left in their care as he was on the point of collapse. This was done and Lieutenant Edmund G. Reuter assumed command.

At 0400 hours Captain Steinen's Company crossed, followed by Major Brumley, the command group of the battalion, and Company E. Lieutenant Reuter was without maps and had no definite idea of the company's mission except that it was to cross the Saar. At the bridge, he was informed by the engineers that the leading element of the battalion had crossed just in front of him. Company E followed and climbed Hocker Hill.

Initially Captain Steinen's Company moved to the high ground on the right of the 1st Battalion, 301st. As the company came into the open, the platoon commanded by Staff Sergeant Carl W. Hager, which numbered about twelve men, was engaged by several enemy machine guns. A firing line was established and Sergeant Hager prepared to attack. Before this assault could be executed, the acting platoon leader was knocked unconscious by concussion and Sergeant James C. Hurlender took command. About this time, Captain Steinen ordered a withdrawal as the under-strength company had encountered an enemy strongpoint. Farther along the line, a patrol led by Lieutenant Kenneth E. Kearns moved against a German 88 position but was forced to withdraw by the fire of an enemy machine gun protecting the artillery emplacement. Shortly thereafter the 356th Field Artillery deluged this position.

While Captain Steinen's Company was engaged to the right of Hocker Hill, Company E was preparing to come up on his left. From the company CP, a patrol under Lieutenant Reuter worked south to study the terrain and determine the best location for a defensive posi-



*German prisoners captured in the 94th's bridgehead being marched through Serrig*

tion. While on this mission, a patrol from Battalion Headquarters Company, led by Staff Sergeant John H. Kinnan, was met. As the patrol leaders discussed the situation an enemy sniper opened fire. Both groups moved against the sniper. As they neared his position, several German riflemen engaged them and it soon became clearly apparent that they had encountered an enemy strongpoint. The patrols pulled back and a complete report of the situation was made to Major Brumley. Since Company E now numbered only thirty-eight men, the battalion commander directed that the twenty-two men of the battalion Antitank Platoon be armed as riflemen and attached to the unit. When this was done, Staff Sergeant George F. Fell took command of the reinforcements. After a short artillery concentration, called by Lieutenant Robert E. Trinkline, the company assaulted the enemy strongpoint at 1430 hours taking the position along with twenty-five prisoners. These PWs were found to be in a dazed condition from continual pounding by the American artillery. This accounted for the ease with which their seemingly impregnable position was taken. Following this, Company E established a defensive line and tied in with Captain Steinen's men.

On the 24th of February the 1258th Engineer Combat Battalion was attached to the 94th, relieving the 3d Battalion, 101st Infantry which reverted to corps control. At 1100 hours the same day, several other changes were made within the Division. As dictated by the existing tactical situation, several of the infantry battalions were temporarily detached from their parent organizations and assigned to the other regiment in the bridgehead. Thus, the 301st Infantry consisted of its own 3d Battalion plus the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 302d, while Colonel Johnson's command was composed of the 2d Battalion, 302d, and the 1st and 2d Battalions of Colonel Hagerty's regiment. The latter unit was less the two platoons of Company G which had crossed at Staadt and were attached to the 3d Battalion, 301st.

This same morning the 3d Battalion, 301st, launched the first coordinated attack since the crossing of the Saar. Object of the assault was to seize the high ground north of Serrig overlooking the town. On the battalion right, Company K was delayed by machine-gun fire until Company I outflanked the enemy positions. Both companies were then able to continue their advance. On the extreme left, the operation did not fare as well. Company L, with two platoons of Company G attached, was responsible for the west of the battalion zone. While the Company G group was moving north between the river and the



railroad tracks, Company L took the frontage from the railroad to the road leading through the woods into Beurig. All efforts of the two platoons of Company G to advance in the face of the numerous enemy pillboxes were stopped cold. To their right, Company L met with better success and soon outflanked these positions. Assault groups from the latter company then dashed across the railroad tracks in rear of the first box. After a short tussle the men of Company L took the bunker. Following this, they advanced north along the tracks against a second pillbox. Suddenly, there was machine-gun fire from the rear and Lieutenant Glenn H. Gass fell mortally wounded. No guard had been left on the captured bunker and German troops had hastily reoccupied it. The Americans withdrew across the railroad tracks, re-formed, and again assaulted the first box. It was reduced a second time and two men were left to man the position as the rest of the group moved forward. In short order the second box was taken.

Throughout the rest of the day the battalion advanced steadily. Progress was slow on the left flank in the fortified area through which Company L and the platoons of Company G were fighting their way. Here pillboxes were cleared one after the other and by late in the afternoon the high ground north of Serrig was occupied. The battalion command post was set up in Saarstein Castle and a defensive line established.

At Staadt ferrying operations progressed favorably throughout the night of the 23d, but shortly after daylight enemy artillery again began to land on the crossing site. A direct hit was made on a raft which was ferrying a jeep, 57mm gun and a Weasel across the river. Before it sank the raft was brought to shore and the gun and vehicles landed. A second raft was then constructed. As this craft made its initial trip across the river, another artillery concentration crashed on the ferry site. Shortly thereafter movement was noticed on the cliff above the crossing. A .50-caliber machine gun was put into action and its crew ordered to rake the cliff at periodic intervals. Several hours later three Germans who had been manning a radio surrendered. They admitted that they had been in a concealed position on the cliffs, directing a portion of the enemy artillery fire which had fallen on the crossing site since the morning of the 22d.

About noon of the 24th Colonel Hagerty arrived at Staadt and was ferried across the Saar. The CO of the 301st was now in command of all troops in the Serrig area. While his forward command post was being set up in town, the colonel contacted the various battalion commanders to gain first-hand information on the situation.

Following the relief of the 3d Battalion, 302d, on the night of the 23d by the 1st Battalion, 301st, Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt had hoped to use the ridge road into Serrig. However, the 2d Battalion, 302d had not yet been able to force the bottleneck at the Hamm bend. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt therefore decided to attempt reaching Serrig by way of the river road. This meant a passage below the 2d Battalion, 302d, and the Germans who were holding up the advance of Major Maixner's men at the hairpin turn. In broad daylight, the entire 3d Battalion marched around the Hamm bend on the river road without having a single shot fired at it from the cliffs overhead. At 1130 hours the battalion arrived in Serrig and shortly thereafter the battalion commander made contact with Colonel Hagerty to whom his unit was then attached.

To this point, corps had been able to supply the Division only one M2 treadway bridge and barely enough floats to span the river. It had been planned originally to put this first vehicular bridge at Staadt, but due to the amount of enemy fire directed against this location, the Division Commander directed the engineers to begin construction at Taben. While the latter location was far from favorable, the heights of Hocker Hill partially protected this crossing from the fire of the German artillery. Construction was accomplished by the 135th Combat Engineers assisted by Company A of the 319th. Operations began at 0230 hours on the 24th and were not completed until 1350 hours the same day. Construction difficulties offered by the nature of the site and the enemy situation alone were responsible for the excessive time consumed in erecting the structure. The Brockway trucks could move to the crossing only one at a time and had to run a 200-yard gantlet of long-range German machine-gun fire to reach the river. Many of these vehicles arrived at the banks of the Saar peppered with holes, but fortunately none of the drivers was hit during the operation and not a single vehicle stalled to block the narrow road. On the east shore, the engineers had to breach the twelve-foot retaining wall along the river with explosives. Moreover, a great deal of work on the approach to the far bank was necessary. This was begun by hand and once the bridge was completed, finished by an angledozer. An armored caterpillar was sent over the treadway bridge soon after its construction, and along the river road to fill the crater in the vicinity of the Hamm bend. As the cat worked on the huge hole, sniper fire ricocheted in all directions from the steel-plated sides of the vehicle.

The first tank to cross this bridge settled one of the inshore pontons

on some sharp rocks on the river bed. This punctured the ponton and repairs were necessary before any further traffic could cross. To provide additional flotation, the west approach was heightened and the remainder of the 778th column crossed. With the passage of the tanks, enemy artillery fire increased, continuing into the night. Many times pontons were punctured, but fortunately the bridge received no direct hits. Engineers maintaining the structure repaired damaged floats immediately and there was no interruption to the flow of traffic.

At 1800 hours the armored column arrived in Serrig where it was met by the Division Commander. Following this, the 3d Battalion, 302d, pushed out to the high ground northeast of town. With little difficulty, it cleared the ridge in its zone until the troops hit the last pillbox. There the ridge top was perfectly flat and this box had its automatic weapons sited for grazing fire. After several attempts had been repulsed, a tank was brought into position. It was now only a short while before daylight and, under the direct support of the armor, the infantry closed on the position and reduced it.

This same night, Staff Sergeant James A. Graham led twenty infantrymen of Company B and four tanks to the hill east of Serrig where the armor assumed positions. To lend local security, the infantry remained with the tanks. It was hoped this movement might assist the 2d Battalion, 302d, to round the hairpin turn on the ridge road by putting armor in rear of the Germans defending the cliffs. At the same time Company A left Serrig and assumed positions on the left of Company C. A composite detail from Companies B and C continued to occupy Château Wursberg, southeast of Serrig close to the river.

While the 1st and 3d Battalions, 302d, were in process of securing the high ground northeast, east and southeast of town, the 3d Battalion, 301st, which had moved north of Serrig during the day, was ordered to press forward another one thousand yards to the next stream line. Toward this end Companies I and K organized a group of patrols to sweep through the woods. A roadblock was also placed on the road leading through the woods into Beurig, at the point where it crossed the east-west stream. Company L and the two platoons of Company G were to continue their task of clearing the pillboxes imbedded beneath the railroad tracks at the base of the cliff. To get at these boxes, the company climbed the hill and descended upon the enemy positions from above and to their rear. It was slow work, but the only reasonable method of tackling the problem. During the night the



*Treadway bridge at Taben. The center ponton, which has been hit and deflated, was repaired shortly after this picture was taken.*

assault teams exhausted the supplies of blasting caps which were used to detonate charges with which pillbox doors and embrasures were blown. They substituted grenades for the blasting caps, the experiment proving highly successful.

On the morning of the 24th, the 2d Battalion, 302d, prepared to launch another attack to break the bottleneck on the ridge road. Company G, which had been worked to the heights above the road, was to attack down the finger-like ridge pointing toward Serrig while Company F again pushed down the road along the rear of the ridge. The attack pressed forward until the flank of Company G was engaged by machine-gun fire from across the draw. This prevented further clearing of the ridge and Company F was unable to move without receiving grenade barrages from the ridge above it. Company G could not silence the machine guns holding up its advance and therefore pulled back to cover.

As they moved to Serrig by the river road during the afternoon, the tanks that crossed at Taben were observed by the 2d Battalion. Plans were then laid for a night attack to force the bottleneck. It was in conjunction with this operation that the four tanks supported by an infantry detail moved out of Serrig during the night. In the moonlight, the battalion advanced once again and found itself able to move forward with surprising ease. Most of the enemy had withdrawn and the battalion pushed around the hairpin against only slight resistance. A short distance farther, troops of the 1st Battalion, 302d, were encountered. Major Maixner's battalion then closed in the area of the 1st Battalion. It was then that Company G discovered its 2d Platoon was missing. This group had been protecting the flank of the battalion when the platoon leader and platoon sergeant became casualties. The rest of the platoon, not knowing the battalion was moving forward, remained on their defensive position. On the following morning German forces located the isolated platoon and drove it from position. Also the enemy retook the pillbox at the Y-shaped junction where the road from Serrig split at the Hamm bend. This severed the ridge road. To rejoin the battalion, the 2d Platoon descended to the river road and proceeded to Serrig via that route.

Prior to dawn a thirty-man patrol from Company A, 301st, cleaned out this troublesome pillbox, killing seven Germans and taking twenty-three prisoners before being driven back by a strong hostile counter-attack.

### *Chapter 33: THE FOURTH AND FIFTH DAYS*

**B**EFORE DAWN of February 25, Company B, 301st, was instructed to maintain contact between the 1st Battalion, 301st, on Hocker Hill and the 2d Battalion, 302d, in position east of Serrig. Between the two units were three thousand yards of rugged terrain. Lieutenant Cancilla put his company on the ridge road and started over the route traversed by Major Maixner's men. The 3d Platoon of the company was in the lead; as it reached the road and trail junction, in the vicinity of the camouflaged pillbox, at the Hamm bend, which had caused the 2d Battalion, 302d, so much trouble, enemy machine-gun fire began to rake the area.

Lieutenant Richard E. Eckstrom, the platoon leader, ordered his men to positions in and around the pillbox until some method could be devised for eliminating the enemy or flanking his position. To the left of the area were the vertical cliffs that fell away to the Saar far below. To the front were occupied enemy positions. After a hasty reconnaissance, Lieutenant Eckstrom returned to the pillbox just as it was grenaded by two Germans. Several of the platoon were injured and it was decided to evacuate the box.

Later, thinking the pillbox had been reoccupied by the enemy, a tank of the 778th Tank Battalion pulled up and fired directly into the position. Unknown to the tankers, two men of Company B and three men from the 301st Field Artillery Battalion were still inside.

Five rounds were fired against the position and following this the tankers brought forward a satchel charge to blow the door of the emplacement. From within, a vision slit popped open and the tankers were informed in no uncertain terms that the inhabitants were American. Luckily, the pillbox had withstood the assault of the tank's gun; none of the men was hurt.

That afternoon Lieutenant Eckstrom and Technical Sergeant Robert O'Hara planned a coordinated attack using both their platoons. Lieutenant Paul Boland of the 301st Field Artillery arranged a preparatory concentration and following this, the attack swept the objective. Having lost this position, the enemy lashed out savagely with mortar, sniper and machine-gun fire. At about this time orders were received for the platoons to rejoin the company on Hocker Hill.

Immediately upon completion of the treadway bridge at Taben, plans were made for a similar construction at Staadt since another M2 bridge had become available and there was little enemy fire then falling in that area. In addition, the ground dominating the Staadt crossing site was entirely in American hands and the continued expansion of the

bridgehead had forced the displacement of the German batteries which had formerly shelled the area. The construction mission was assigned to Company A of the 319th Engineers, which began work at 0800 hours on the 25th. By 1515 hours the same day this second bridge was completed and ready for traffic.

At 1030 hours on the morning of the 25th, XX Corps informed the Division Commander that the 94th was to attack north from its bridgehead. At the same time, the 376th Infantry, which was still attached to the 10th Armored Division and had crossed at Ayl, was to attack south to link the two bridgeheads. In addition the 94th was to clear the road from the Taben site to Beurig and uncover the Saarburg-Irsch road so that armor could be committed to the east. The 10th Armored had been unable to put a bridge over the Saar at its crossing site; as a result, its tanks were to move south and cross on the bridges in General Malony's zone.

Traffic control had proved a major problem at the Taben bridge during the early phases of the crossing. To prevent the recurrence of such a situation, the Division staff produced a detailed traffic-control plan which was to be supervised rigidly by the military police. This plan established a series of control posts at Staadt, Kastel, Freudenburg, Weiten, Rodt, Taben and various points along the main roads leading into the area. The 94th Signal Company connected these by telephones, with the circuit so arranged that all posts could hear instructions given other stations. Two MPs were placed at each position: one manned the phone while the other controlled the flow of traffic. A central control station was established by Lieutenant Colonel Phillips, the G-4, in his office at Freudenburg.

Before a convoy was permitted to enter the road net of the controlled area, its commander was obliged to call Traffic Control and report the number and type of vehicles. The G-4 Section then indicated the exact time at which the convoy might proceed and informed the various numbered posts within the area of the approach of the column. Each control post would alert the next by announcing the approach of a column, and once it had passed would inform Traffic Control that it had cleared. This extensive communications system also permitted columns to be halted quickly in the event of enemy artillery fire on any particular sector of the controlled area. Columns travelled well dispersed and moved freely through the critical zone. Effective execution of this plan moved all organic transportation of the Division and its attached units, along with most of the vehicles of the 10th Armored Division, across the Saar in record time.



To clear the area north to Beurig and secure the lateral route from Saarburt to Irsch before the arrival of the armor in the Division bridgehead presented a big problem. Since the 3d Battalion, 301st, and the 3d Battalion, 302d, were in the best positions to make the sweep north, orders were speedily issued to them. Simultaneous thrusts were to be made by Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's men, on the left, aiming at Beurig and Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's battalion pushing to Irsch.

In front of the 3d Battalion, 301st, lay approximately 1,500 yards of heavy forest and beyond this the fortified town of Beurig. Through these woods the rifle companies moved, routing out snipers and reducing machine-gun nests. Finally they reached edge of the woods and looked down into Beurig. The ground was wide open, studded with pillboxes and bunkers, wire entanglements and tank traps, communication trenches and minefields.

On the edge of the woods Company I holed up in some houses and waited for dawn. As the troops settled down to rest, mortar shells began falling on and around the buildings they occupied. While the shells were not of a heavy caliber, the concentrations were intense. It was soon observed that they were coming from the vicinity of the hospital east of town; judging by sound alone, it seemed as if only one weapon was firing. If this were so, the German gunners were getting as many as twenty-seven shells in the air before the first exploded. Because of this fire, the company was withdrawn from the houses into the woods, which were receiving no attention from the enemy mortar. The following day, when the area was cleared, a 50mm belt-fed mortar responsible for the above concentrations was discovered in one of the pillboxes taken.

At the same time Company I closed up to the edge of the woods in front of Beurig, Company K, on the right of the battalion, was looking down into Irsch from the edge of the woods in its zone. Farther to the right on the high ground across the stream flowing north into Irsch, Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men were in position above the town.

During the afternoon of the 25th, prior to the completion of the treadway bridge at Serrig, Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division began crossing at Taben. CCB was to move up the river road, through Serrig to the Beurig-Irsch road, where it would turn east to gain access to the Zerf-Pellingen road which led to Trier. At Irsch the tankers were to pick up their armored infantrymen who had crossed into the 376th bridgehead opposite Ayl and were fighting south.



*Stinking compost piles and fresh German cadavers line the muddy streets of Irsch*

In Serrig it had been anticipated that the river road leading north to Beurig would not be cleared of the numerous pillboxes and bunkers that commanded it by the time the armor arrived. Hence, guides who were familiar with road leading through the Forêt de Treves into Beurig, were waiting at the south edge of Serrig when the leading elements of CCB arrived there late in the afternoon. One man was placed on the lead vehicle of each of the march units and the tanks moved through the woods. Once they had gained the Beurig-Irsch road, the tankers swung east. As they neared Irsch, the men of Company K of the 301st moved from the cover of the woods to assist in taking the town. The combat command had expected to meet its armored infantrymen in Irsch but, finding the town still held by the enemy, warmly received the assistance of Company K. Half the town was cleared before Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's men were withdrawn to prepare for the attack on Beurig the following morning.

With the coming of evening the 3d Battalion, 302d, moved into Irsch and assisted the tankers in clearing the rest of the town. During the night the armored infantry pushed down from the north and the following morning the advance of the combat command and its infantry continued east toward Zerf.

The movement northward of the 3d Battalions of the 301st and 302d had created a gap between the right of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men and the left of Major Stanion's battalion. To plug this hole, the 2d Battalion, 302d, which had spent the night on the hill east of Serrig, was to tie into the right of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's

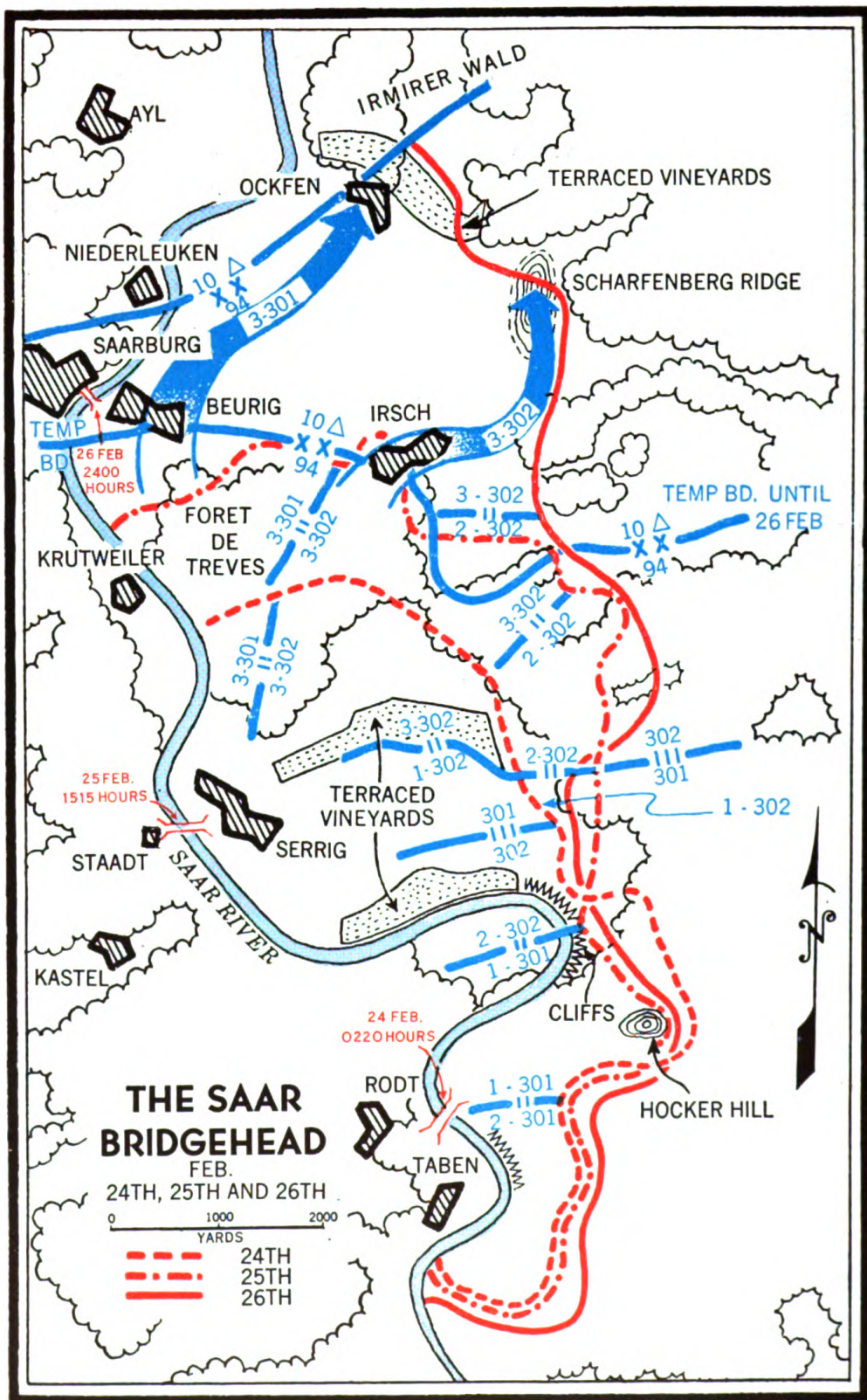


*A German Mark V tank knocked out east of Irsch*

command and form a line along the stream running north into Irsch. The right of Major Maixner's battalion was to be joined with the left of the 1st Battalion, 302d.

To accomplish this mission, the 2d Battalion, 302d, moved off to the northeast. It had crossed the valley to its front and was advancing through a wooded area on the nose of the next hill when a large group of Germans suddenly attacked. At the same time American artillery began to fall on both groups. The 3d Battalion, 302d, had observed the enemy attack forming in the woods and then, mistaking Major Maixner's men for the enemy, had called for fire. The artillery broke up the enemy attack and as the fire lifted, the 2d Battalion withdrew slightly, reorganized, then pushed to the top of the hill. The troops next moved up the ridge, crossed the road running along it and went into the desired positions.

As each of the regimental commanders had under his control only one of his own battalions and two of the battalions of the other regiment in the bridgehead, General Malony had orders issued for a switch of regimental zones. Hence, at 1300 hours on the 25th, the 302d Infantry assumed command of the sector north of Serrig and Colonel Johnson moved his CP to Schloss Saarfels. His command then con-





sisted of his own 2d and 3d Battalions and the 3d Battalion of the 301st. Colonel Hagerty in the southern sector was in command of the 1st and 2d Battalions 301st and the 1st Battalion 302d.

During the afternoon of the 25th there was considerable activity in the southern half of the bridgehead. On Hocker Hill, Company A of the 301st was counterattacked by the 506th SS Panzergrenadier Battalion which had just moved into the area. Against this assault, the company's front held fast, though at one point the SS troops were able to advance their lines to within seventy-five yards of the American positions.

This same afternoon, Company B of the 302d, less the 2d Platoon, which was operating against the pillbox area on the ridge road, relieved Company C on the hill east of Serrig. The latter company moved into town for a well earned rest.

At 1315 hours on the 25th the position of the 5th Ranger Battalion astride the Beurig-Zerf road also received a determined enemy counterattack. After several hours of bitter fighting, the Germans were repulsed. In the fracas the Rangers took 120 prisoners.

In the area of the 2d Battalion 301st, Captain Steinen's company jumped off at 1800 hours, passing through Company E to assault Wackelser Fels, a hill to the south of Hocker Hill. Advancing behind their own marching fire the men of the composite company were able to seize part of their objective. However, the highest ground remained in German hands by reason of the volume of machine-gun, sniper, artillery and mortar fire the enemy was able to bring to bear. It was almost impossible to dig in on the rocky terrain and with the coming of darkness the situation continued extremely fluid.

#### FEBRUARY 26, 1945

At 1000 hours on the morning of the 26th the 3d Battalion, 301st, launched its attack against Beurig. The open ground surrounding the town bristled with enemy fortifications and the companies moved forward slowly. Surprisingly, the first pillboxes were taken with a minimum of effort and after this there was practically no resistance. Cautiously, the troops advanced in the silent, deserted town. Houses were checked methodically as the leading elements pushed to the center of the town. Suddenly, activity was noted in the northern and yet unexplored portion of Beurig. A quick scrutiny sufficed to confirm the fact that the troops to the front of Lieutenant Colonel McNulty's battalion were Americans. As the forces joined, the newcomers identi-



Where "Up Front" begins

fied themselves as the 1st Battalion, 376th. Attached to the 10th Armored Division, they were the leading elements of the southward drive to link the two bridgeheads. By noon Beurig had been cleared and the Serrig-Beurig-Irsch road swept for mines and readied for traffic.

Pinched out by the advance of the 376th, the 3d Battalion, 301st, reorganized and underwent some changes. Lieutenant Colonel McNulty was ordered to regiment to become executive officer, replacing Lieutenant Colonel Hardin who had been wounded in Staadt on the 22d. Major Gilbert N. O'Neil assumed command of the battalion and Captain Frierson of Company L succeeded him as battalion executive. Command of Company L passed to Lieutenant Samuel T. Minnich.

Late in the afternoon of the 26th, the boundary between the 94th and the 10th Armored Divisions was moved north and the 3d Battalion, 301st, was ordered to occupy the high ground above Ockfen once the 3d Battalion, 302d, had made contact with Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion. Major O'Neil's men marched north along the river, removing the undefended roadblocks they encountered en route. That night the battalion's kitchens rolled into town and for the first time since the crossing, the troops enjoyed a hot meal. Along with the kitchens came mail and some belated Christmas packages which were well received.

The boundary change materially increased the zone of responsibility of the 302d Infantry, which was holding the left or northern flank of



*Throughout the fighting east of the Saar River, PWs were used extensively as litter bearers as they moved to the rear*

the Division. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt was ordered to move against the high ground northeast of Irsch, called Scharfenberg Ridge and Hill 426. The 3d Battalion, 376th, was known to be on the northern nose of this high ground which they had held through a series of severe attacks. During the afternoon of the 26th, the 3d Battalion of the 302d attacked, encountering a maze of pillboxes and bunkers. Had these positions been well manned, it would have taken a force many times the size of the battalion to breach their defenses. For the most part though, they were unoccupied; principal resistance encountered was from snipers and machine-guns. The troops moved up the steep wooded slope of Hill 426 and then down the ridge, sweeping the enemy's feeble resistance before them. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion was found as reported. Later in the day the 3d Battalion, 301st, relieved the 3d Battalion, 376th, which moved into Ockfen. However, immediately after contact was established by Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men, the 2d Battalion, 302d, swung its left





*A litter party moves across the Taben bridge*

flank forward to maintain contact with the right of the 3d Battalion, 302d. Major Maixner's men retained their same general positions, guarding the ridge running northeast from Serrig.

The Division now held a bridgehead 11,000 yards wide and 5,000 yards deep. Combat Command B of the 10th Armored had completed crossing at Taben at 0222 hours and CCA of the same division began its crossing at noon over the 94th bridge at Serrig. The tanks were streaming east to Zerf where they turned north for the push to Trier.

With the clearing of the town of Beurig, the 135th Engineer Combat Battalion began construction of a third bridge at Saarburg. There was no enemy fire on the site and by midnight of the 26th, a heavy ponton bridge was in place, ready for traffic.

During the 26th activity in the zone of the 301st was light. Major Brumley, holding the right of the regimental line, dispatched Lieutenant Kearns and his platoon of Company F to establish a roadblock in the town of Saarhausen. To accomplish this mission, it was necessary for the platoon, which numbered fourteen including the medic, to clean out seven pillboxes between themselves and Saarhausen and then capture the town. In the advance, Private First Class Melvin C. Magnuson, acting as platoon sergeant, observed a German standing

outside the first box. He grenaded the position, then persuaded the enemy to surrender. Among the prisoners taken was a German NCO who agreed to negotiate the surrender of the other boxes. In short order, the platoon had all seven pillboxes and seventy prisoners to its credit. Without difficulty the town of Saarhausen was entered and the desired roadblock erected and manned by riflemen. That night the platoon dined on fried ham and eggs prepared by a German housewife. Furthermore, they continued to fare well for the two days they held this position after being reinforced by the battalion antitank platoon.

The same afternoon, Technical Sergeant Frank S. Drobinski of Company C of the 301st, received word that if he returned immediately to the battalion CP in Taben, he could leave for the States on a rotation furlough. As he started down Hocker Hill, geysers of water were being thrown up in the river by the explosion of enemy shells. Through their glasses, men of the battalion intelligence section followed the sergeant's movement down the hill and across the treadway bridge. He made the trip safely.

In Taben enemy artillery fell with clock-like precision and surprising accuracy. It was soon discovered the best time to enter or leave town was immediately after the German artillerymen finished a concentration. All supplies for the battalions on Hocker Hill passed through town, were brought across the river and then hauled to the units by carrying parties that climbed the steep cliff trails. Battalion headquarters companies furnished most of the men for these details, but cooks, mail orderlies and artificers were included in the columns.

Medical evacuation from the outset of the operation was extremely difficult in the Taben area. Casualties had to be carried from Hocker Hill and the surrounding heights by litter teams, hauled across the river and up the steep and sometimes fire-swept road into Taben. Prior to the 26th, ambulances approaching the bridge site were subject to sniper as well as artillery fire.

## Chapter 34: THE FIGHT FOR THE HILLTOPS

ON THE 27th, General Malony received orders to continue the expansion of the bridgehead to the line Geizenburg (exclusive) to the river bend at Hamm and Division Field Order No. 14 was issued indicating eleven hilltops, west of the Ruwer River, which were the next objectives of the 94th. Eight of these were in the zone of the 302d Infantry. Between the men of Colonel Johnson's regiment and these strategic bits of high ground were twenty square kilometers of wooded terrain which would have to be cleared. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 302d, were ordered to continue their advance toward the most northern of these objectives, while the 3d Battalion, 301st, cutting in rear of the above units, moved east to seize Hills 4, 5, and 6 which surrounded Zerf.

The 3d Battalion, 301st, moved out of Ockfen the morning of the 27th and arrived in Irsch about noon. Since the 10th Armored Division had priority on the roads, there was little possibility of obtaining or using vehicles to move the battalion east toward its objectives, some eight thousand yards beyond Irsch. Loaded with full equipment, the tired infantrymen started their long march. It was growing dark as Company K turned south from the Irsch-Zerf road to move against Hill 4. Between the company and its objective were 1,500 yards of woods which would have to be cleared before the hill could be assaulted.

Unknown to Company K, the 5th Ranger Battalion had been holding these woods for the last four days against repeated enemy counterattacks. In turn the Rangers were unaware that elements of the Division were in the immediate vicinity. As the company reached a point some five hundred yards within the woods, from the darkness ahead came a sharp command to halt. At the same time the unmistakable sound of a machine gun being cocked was heard. Somewhere along the line a rifle was fired; instantly a fire fight developed. Lieutenant Robert L. Vinue, certain that the command to halt had been given by an American, dashed toward the Ranger lines shouting for them to hold their fire. In this he succeeded, after a few minutes in which both units swapped lead at almost point-blank range. The engagement proved costly to Company K which lost three men killed and seven wounded. These losses brought the effective strength of the company down to fifty men. Checking with the Rangers, Captain Warren learned that his objective was occupied by the enemy and that there were pillboxes to his front which would have to be reduced. In view of these facts, it was decided to await the coming of light to reconnoiter the objective.

Meanwhile the remainder of the battalion marched into Zerf under the cover of darkness. Patrols were dispatched to Hills 5 and 6, which dominated the town, to learn if they were occupied by the enemy. When it was discovered the Germans held Hill 5, Company L took positions in Zerf for the night and laid plans for an assault the following morning. Hill 6 was free of the enemy, so Company I moved immediately to occupy this objective.

With the receipt of the new orders, the 3d Battalion, 302d, made preparations for a continuation of the advance to the northeast, against the high ground from which the 3d Battalion, 376th, had received so much fire while it was practically isolated on Scharfenberg Ridge. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt launched his attack at 1750 hours, under the support of all available antiaircraft, tank and tank destroyer weapons he could muster. This fire literally riddled the rocky crest of his objective. When the assault elements of the battalion were within five hundred yards of the hill, the enemy holding the position began to surrender. The concentrated fire of the .50-calibers and 75s had been too much. The position fell without resistance.

In proceeding along the ridge, Company L encountered four mutually supporting pillboxes and negotiated for their surrender. A German first sergeant, who was in charge of the strongpoint, agreed to yield if the Americans would stage a mock battle to save his reputation. Company L made the desired demonstration, after which three of the boxes surrendered. The fourth refused to capitulate and since it was now dark, an attack on the last pillbox was postponed until morning.

In moving forward Company K had discovered some large caves in the side of a hill. These were crowded with German civilians who were placed under guard and moved to Irsch. In moving to the rear the guards were fired upon by a nine-man German patrol, but after the first shot or two the attackers lost their ardor and elected to join the captives. Meanwhile, the battalion continued forward and by 1950 hours all assigned objectives had been taken.

To the right, the 2d Battalion, 302d, also received orders during the afternoon for a continuation of the advance. Since much of the ground in its zone was open and without cover, Major Maixner elected to accomplish his mission after dark. At 1915 hours the battalion moved forward. The ridge to its front was taken without difficulty and the advance continued. As Company F moved across a bald hill, the lead scouts found themselves face to face with a group of Germans. Open-



*As the fighting moves eastward, the people of Irsch flock back to their shattered village*

ing fire with machine-guns, the enemy raked the area. While under this grazing fire, one of the men who could speak a little German hailed the enemy. It soon became evident that the defenders of the hill might be talked into surrender. This man crawled back from the line to locate Captain Kops who speaks fluent German. Together the two men made their way forward. At the same time, the German company commander was being brought forward by his troops. Negotiations began and after much wrangling, the German captain surrendered his company along with the pillboxes commanding the hill.

In the 301st sector, Major Stanion's battalion of the 302d also attacked on the 27th. Supported by light tanks, Companies A and B assaulted the high ground to their front and captured four pillboxes. Lieutenant Baumgaertner was questioning some of the prisoners taken from these positions about their *Oberleutnant* who had run away at the start of the American attack, when a phone in one of the pillboxes began to ring. The CO of Company A answered it in German and was asked by an enemy artillery officer at the other end of the line if more fire would be needed to repulse the Americans. The lieutenant informed the German officer that the action had involved only a small patrol and that all was quiet. This explanation must have seemed plausible. For the next three hours there was no fire on the surround-

ing area. Throughout the 27th and the 28th the company continued to hold these positions with little difficulty.

Also on the 27th the troublesome pillbox at the Hamm bend on the ridge road again was taken. Led by Lieutenant Arthur A. Shock-snyder and Lieutenant Eckstrom, the 2d and 3d Platoons of Company B, 301st, reduced the position with a two-pronged attack which also cleared the surrounding area. This action lifted the last German observation north of Taben within the Division zone.

To clear the heights of Wackelser Fels, the 2d Battalion, 301st, launched another attack on the 27th. Perfect enemy observation from the heights above and the understrength condition of Captain Steinen's Company and Company G prevented the battalion from storming its objective. Following this unsuccessful thrust, the lines reverted to the same general positions previously held by Major Brumley's men. During the morning Staff Sergeant Murry W. Forsyth of Company H, who was manning a Company OP, was hit in the legs and back by artillery fragments. He remained at his post, continuing to direct the fire of the 2d Battalion's 81s until late in the afternoon when he was carried from the position. After dark Private David H. Troupe, a recent reinforcement to Company E, was included on a patrol because of his ability to speak German. When his party was challenged by an enemy sentry in the vicinity of a known German strongpoint, Troupe snarled angrily in German, "Shut your mouth! What do you want to do, call the officers?" The patrol then moved off unmolested.

As the light of dawn was beginning to filter into the foggy valley of the Ruwer River on the morning of the 28th, Company L launched its attack against Hill 5. The enemy was taken completely by surprise and the battle was short-lived. Things then remained fairly quiet until about 1515 hours when, preceded by a ten-minute artillery concentration, a force estimated at one German rifle company stormed out of the woods against the hill. Supporting the German infantry were six tanks which rumbled up the road east of Hill 5. For half an hour the battle raged at close quarters before the enemy was repulsed. Following this engagement fourteen PWs were marched into Zerf.

Company K spent the morning of the 28th conducting reconnaissance, forming assault squads and completing plans for their attack on Hill 4. At 1400 hours Captain Warren's men jumped off moving slowly forward in the face of heavy fire from six well manned pill-boxes. One by one these boxes were reduced by assault groups which effectively employed their demolitions against embrasures and bunker

doors. After two hours of hard fighting the hill was cleared and occupied.

The battalion had gained all its objectives, but was scattered over better than four thousand yards of frontage, holding Hills 4, 5, and 6. Between these strong points the enemy was free to infiltrate, hampered only by American patrols. Total strength in riflemen of the three line companies did not exceed two hundred men. To make matters worse, the amount of enemy artillery and mortar fire falling on the American positions increased. A German 88, zeroed on the big bend in the road southwest of Zerf, sniped at every vehicle entering or leaving town and a shell fragment from this piece neatly removed the windshield of General Malony's escort vehicle on one of his trips to Zerf.

The following morning the enemy again attacked Hill 5 in an attempt to regain this valuable piece of terrain which afforded unobstructed observation of the town of Zerf and the American main supply route which passed through it. This attack was repulsed, but not without losses. Lieutenant Minnich, who had assumed command of Company L a few days before, was among the wounded; command passed to Lieutenant Robert H. Henley.

Hour by hour as the day progressed, the volume of mortar, artillery and rocket fire on Zerf and the road into town increased. Before long, and with good reason, the area was dubbed Dead Man's Corner. Beyond the town, the Division's strongpoints were pounded relentlessly by the enemy. German patrols probed the area and minor counter-attacks were frequent. Whenever things quieted, the men on the hills took what steps they could to improve their positions. Wire entanglements were spread, antitank mines and booby traps laid and trip flares installed to warn of the enemy's approach. Between the strongpoints and among the gaps in the final protective line fires, numerous pre-arranged concentrations were plotted for the mortars and artillery.

On the morning of the 28th, Company L of the 302d moved against the pillbox which had refused to capitulate after the mock battle. As the infantrymen closed for the kill, the Germans manning the bunker thought better of their decision and surrendered. Following this action, the battalion received some badly needed reinforcements and these were apportioned among the companies. However, even with the new men the number of effectives was so low that one platoon of Company K was attached to Company I and another to Company L to form two moderate-sized units.

At 1605 hours the battalion continued its attack. On the next hill



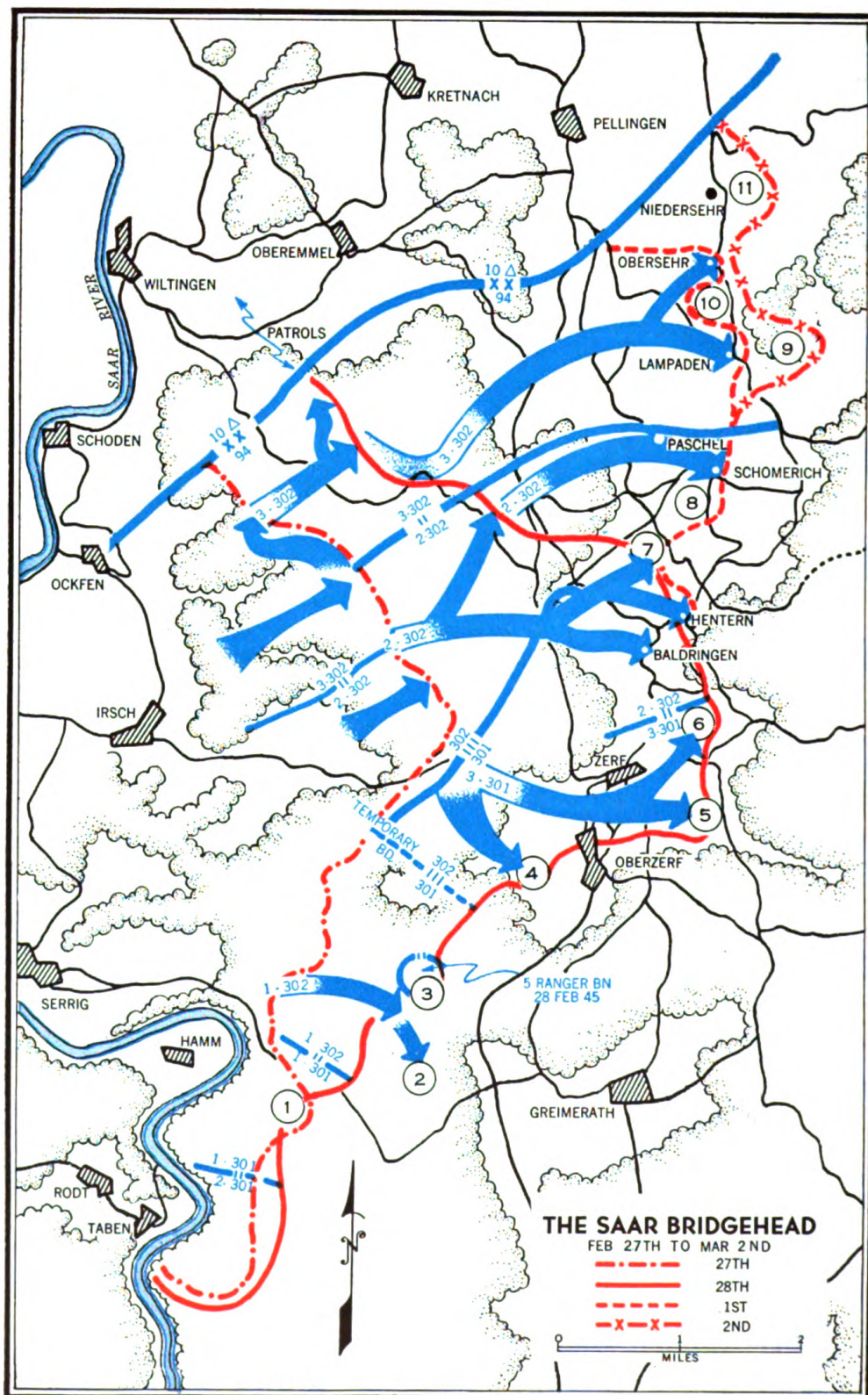
both Companies I and L encountered manned pillboxes. Company I employed its attached platoon in a flanking movement to the right, while the remainder of the company launched a frontal assault. After a hard fight all positions in the company zone were reduced by 1940 hours. Company L had particular difficulty in reducing the last pillbox in its sector. Yelling from the embrasures, the Germans lured a platoon sergeant forward to negotiate a surrender, then shot him with their machine gun. This action spurred the company to greater effort. A satchel charge was worked forward and detonated against one of the pillbox's embrasures; following this the enemy decided to yield.

Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men then reorganized and moved off through the dense woods on a compass bearing, against the next enemy strongpoint they were scheduled to reduce. It was extremely dark as the troops pushed down the steep slope to their front, into a ravine and up the rugged slope on the far side. The battalion advanced steadily but could find no trace of enemy pillboxes. In all directions the woods were searched without a single bunker being discovered. When daylight came and the objective had still not been located, the artillery was requested to fire a smoke shell on the coordinates of the enemy position. This shell exploded about one thousand yards to the rear of the battalion; there the pillboxes were located. So cleverly were these positions camouflaged that the scouts of the battalion had walked over them in the darkness without detecting their presence.

The 2d Battalion, 302d, after receiving its replacements, attacked at 1425 hours on the 28th, with its three rifle companies abreast. All companies moved forward rapidly, mopping up a few scattered snipers and some machine gun nests. On reaching the top of the ridge, Company F swept onward and with little difficulty occupied Hill 7. Company E moved into Baldringen where a hot street fight developed as the enemy put up the first determined resistance since Irsch. Progress was slow, but by 1845 hours the entire battalion was on its objective.

The following morning at 1030 hours Major Maixner's men moved forward in the last phase of their attack, when Company F pushed down the forward slope of Hill 7, into Hentern. German civilians in the town presented a big problem as this was the first town in which the civil population had remained to face the Division's advance. Civilians were rounded up and herded into the schoolhouse in the center of town where they were placed under guard. Staff Sergeant Paul Pflueger continues the story.

In the early afternoon Private First Class Philip Moscinski and Private First



Class Donald Lundquist came running to the outpost where I was stationed to report that the schoolhouse was in a wild state of excitement because one of the women was going to have a baby. All of the civilians were jabbering, so they wanted me to try to restore order by speaking to them in German. Just as I started in the direction of the schoolhouse, the expectant mother dashed down the road, past our farthest outpost, over a small bridge to a house near the edge of the woods which was held by the Germans. Despite the confusion created by a group of excited civilians who gathered around me, I managed to find one old woman who would act as midwife. She, Technician Fifth Grade Oscar Sommerford [1st Platoon aid man] and I hurried to the house and into the basement where we found the frightened woman. She had fled from the crowded schoolhouse to find a comfortable couch and a clean spot to have her baby. With the aid of two other women, the midwife, Oscar and I prepared hot water and clean bandages. Sommerford and I were like fish out of water. Neither of us had ever been present for a childbirth, except our own. We hoped the baby would come before nightfall, so that we could evacuate the whole group to the center of town and have the security of the outposts. As it was, the Germans could walk in on us without the knowledge of our outposts. But, the baby didn't cooperate.

Six o'clock came. It was nearly dark outside. Sommerford decided to go to the company CP to phone Captain Siegel at the aid station for instructions. I was left behind in the candle-lit basement with the women. Some distant artillery shells were bursting. With every explosion the women became terrified and fell on their knees to pray in a droning, tearful way . . . "*Heilige Maria*" . . . the young mother was in her labor pains. I had to help her strain, massage her stomach and see if the baby was on its way. Time ground on. Seven o'clock. Eight o'clock. It was now pitch-dark outside the bolted door. I kept thinking to myself: I wonder what the Germans will do if they find me here? Especially if they see the Luger pistol I took from a Nazi noncom after crossing the Saar.

Suddenly there was a sharp rapping at the door. I was relieved to hear the voice of Sommerford and quickly opened the bolt. He told me we had orders to draw back into town immediately as there was another report of a possible counterattack. The baby was about to arrive. (I heard the next day a bouncing boy made his appearance five minutes after we left.)

Leaving the scared women, we started out into the blackness. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. It was impossible to detect the road, you had to feel it with your feet. We almost missed the bridge, which was packed with dynamite, ready to be blown in case of an enemy attack. Just across the bridge was a tank blockade of logs in which an opening had been sawed. Waving my hands in front of me, I felt the rear end of a horse which was standing defiantly in the middle of the opening. I hit him with my hand and then the butt of my rifle trying to get him to move. Instead he kicked out viciously with his hind legs, hitting me directly in the stomach (which fortunately was padded by a blanket I was carrying). Then the horse galloped off. Moving ahead, Oscar called to me, "Hey, Pflueger, come over this way. Here's the road over here." Just then I heard a loud splash. Oscar had mistaken the creek for the road. Somehow we managed to feel our way to the company CP without further incident.

Company G, on the left of the battalion, swung to the east as it cleared the last of the woods in its sector and moved across the open ground to Paschel, Schomerick and Hill 8. Small groups of snipers left behind by the Germans to delay the American advance were quickly wiped out, and the battalion was in possession of its final objective by 1300 hours on the 1st of March. Defensive positions were prepared and continually improved during the following days.

The 2d Battalion, 301st, on the extreme southern flank of the bridgehead, also continued to improve its positions on the 28th. The battalion's lines were stretched thin and the enemy held considerable ground which looked down on Major Brumley's position. Although the situation was undesirable, this line had to be held.

Also on the 28th, the 5th Ranger Battalion, after assisting the 3d Battalion, 301st, in the capture of Hill 4, moved forward and took Hill 3 at 1540 hours after encountering stiff enemy resistance. At 1745 hours the Germans struck back with a counterattack which was repulsed after Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan's men had inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and taken 150 prisoners.

On the 1st of March the 1st Battalion, 302d, attacked during the morning to gain Hill 2, southeast of Serrig. Companies A and C launched this thrust while Company B remained in a defensive position on the left of the battalion sector. About three hundred yards across the line of departure, the assault companies were hit by a hail of enemy rocket, artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. Both units, already pitifully under strength, suffered heavily. In Company A, Sergeant Chester Burns was the only one of his seven-man squad to escape death or injury. Some of Company C's squads were down to two men. As the advance stalled, the men dug in at the point of their farthest advance. These positions were in full view of the high ground held by the enemy from which they were pounded relentlessly. About the middle of the afternoon, the intensity and accuracy of the German fire forced the companies to withdraw. The battalion fell back to its original lines where the troops dug in for the night.

In conjunction with the assault of the 1st Battalion, 302d, Company A of the 301st, on the right of Major Stanion's command, moved forward. The object of its advance was to hinge the left flank of Major Hodges' battalion on the right of the 1st Battalion, 302d, if the attack were a success. Company A also encountered determined resistance and stopped when the battalion on its left was halted. During the attack, a section of Company D's machine guns, under Lieutenant

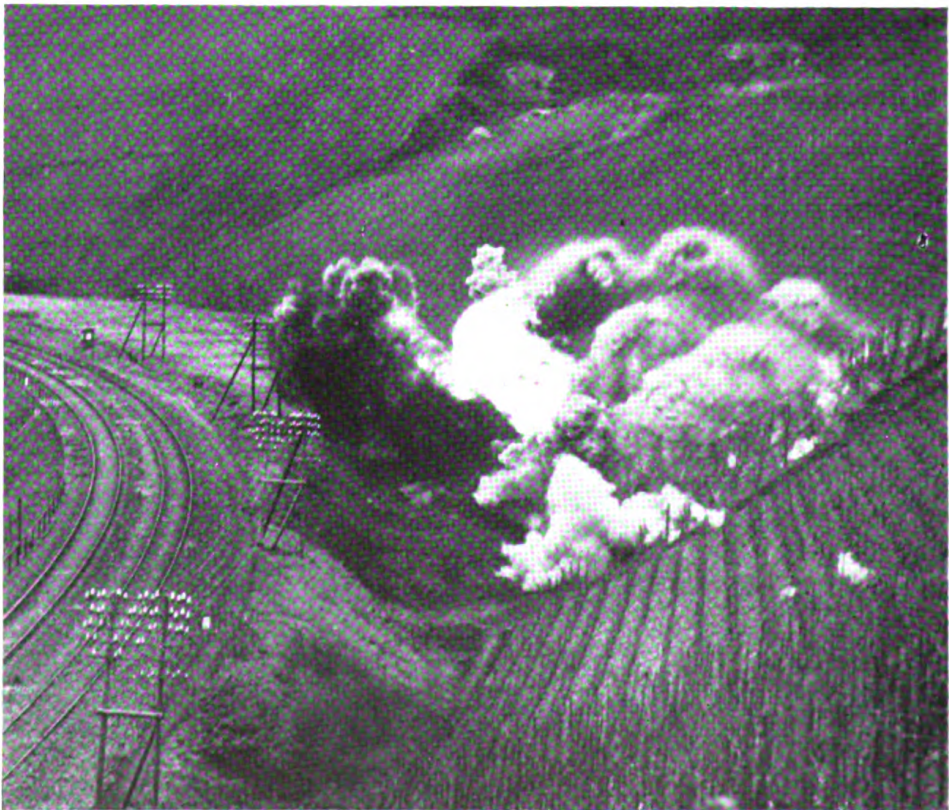
Howard P. Rives, supported Company A. By the time the rifle platoons began to withdraw, only two men and the lieutenant were still in the action. Company A's strength had been seventy-five riflemen when it moved to the attack. As it withdrew from this unsuccessful venture, there were only twenty-eight effectives left.

On the evening of March 1, 1945, the 2d Battalion, 301st, obtained an accurate bearing on some German mortars which had been causing quite a bit of trouble. A fire mission was requested, but the 301st Field Artillery could not respond immediately because of a priority mission. Consequently, the task was bucked to Cannon Company of the 301st, and six 105mm infantry howitzers went into action. The mortars were silenced and enemy prisoners later reported this fire also broke up a German counterattack by falling on the assembly area in which it was forming.

The 3d Battalion, 302d, making a wide turn, pushed forward at 1115 hours on March 1, 1945. Companies I and K were to clear the last of the woods while Company L remained in reserve. Encountering little resistance, the assault companies soon broke into the open and crossed the Zerf-Pellingen road which was the main route into Trier. Through the afternoon the advance continued eastward and by 1830 hours, Company I had taken Lampaden and Company K was in Obersehr. Early the following morning, they moved forward again and by 0837 hours had occupied Hills 9, 10 and 11. During the afternoon Company L was brought forward to Paschel to be within supporting distance of the rest of the battalion.

At 0900 hours on the 2d of March, the 1st Battalion, 302d, attacked Hill 2 for the second time. Fifty minutes later it made contact with the 5th Rangers on the left and the assault forces continued forward slowly, against increasing resistance, until shortly after noon when the leading elements gained a foothold on the northern portion of the objective. A patrol was then dispatched to the Rangers to request tank support with which it was hoped the remainder of Hill 2 could be won. At 1426 hours Major Stanion's battalion reported to the 301st Infantry, to whom it was attached, that thirty-seven men, elements of Companies B and C, and a section of HMGs from Company D, were on the northern half of the objective. This force represented remnants of the 175 men who had jumped off for the attack at 0900 hours. There was still no word of the fate of the patrol which had been sent to the Rangers for tank support when the enemy launched a violent counter-





**Top: A captured pillbox is prepared for demolition. Bottom: Fire in the hole!**

attack at 1818 hours and drove the small force from the hill. In this engagement the depleted companies again suffered heavily. One enemy concentration alone, employed in the neighborhood of 200 rockets.

As on the previous day, Company A of the 301st attacked to tie in on Major Stanion's right should Hill 2 be taken. The desired contact was made about noon, but the enemy's counterattack dislodged the company. Determined to hold the hill in question, the Germans were willing to sacrifice the men necessary to accomplish this end.

On the morning of the 3d, Company C of the 302d, which had been able to muster about seventy men, jumped off at 1000 hours to storm Hill 2 again. En route it was held up by the intensity of the enemy's fire. The battalion commander went forward to the company CP and after personally checking the situation, sent his S-3, Lieutenant Robert L. Woodburn, to Colonel Hagerty to explain the depleted condition of the battalion and the impossibility of this understrength force taking the assigned objective. As a result, the mission of the battalion was changed. The 1st Battalion, 302d, was instructed to hold what ground it had and establish contact with the units on its flanks. Orders were received for the relief of this battalion by elements of the 3d Battalion, 376th, the following day.

While these actions were taking place along the front, the Division engineers were destroying the pillboxes and bunkers of the Siegfried Line which had already been taken. Many of the boxes held large stores of ammunition with which they could be blown up readily. Where the explosives on hand were insufficient for complete destruction, additional enemy ammunition was hauled forward from the German dump in the vicinity of Beurig. In addition to handling demolitions, the engineers had their ever-present jobs of supply and maintenance throughout the Division area.

During this period, February 27 to March 2, the Division added 1719 prisoners to its ever mounting total with scores of 556, 650, 278, and 235 on succeeding days.

With the exception of Hill 2, the objectives outlined by Division Field Order No. 14 had been taken. All that remained was to hold the bridgehead until additional troops could be brought into the area by XX Corps for a new push to the east.



## Chapter 35: CT 376

**A**TACHMENT OF THE 376th Combat Team to the 10th Armored Division was continued by Corps Field Order No. 11, which also directed the tankers to effect a crossing of the Saar on the morning of February 22. After taking their objectives of Wincheringen and Bilzingen, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 376th were ordered into Mannebach and accomplished the movement by marching. The 1st Battalion, in regimental reserve, was picked up in Nennig and moved by truck to join the rest of the regiment. At the same time the regimental command post moved to Mannebach.

When Colonel McClune received orders from the 10th Armored Division calling for an assault crossing of the Saar at 0400 hours on the morning of the 22d, he dispatched liaison officers to contact his various subordinate commanders and have them report to him without delay, for a river crossing on this short notice presented numerous problems. Adding to the enormity of the task was the swollen condition of the Saar and the fact that the main defenses of the Siegfried Line lay just beyond it. No one had yet seen the river or the pillbox-studded hills to the east, for the armored infantry was still engaged in clearing the area west of the Saar from which the crossing would have to be made. However, a map reconnaissance presented anything but a pretty picture.

It was well after dark when the staff and commanders assembled to receive the attack order. The regimental commander announced that he had decided to employ two battalions abreast for the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's 3d Battalion was to cross directly east of Ayl and seize the steep bluffs north of Ockfen. The 1st Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Miner, would cross several hundred yards up stream to take the high ground south of town. Upon securing these dominant pieces of terrain, the remaining battalion was to cross at the northern site and assault Ockfen. Regimental objective had been designated as Scharfenberg Ridge, located three thousand yards east of Ockfen and looking down the valley formed by the two hills mentioned above. Once the entire regiment had crossed and seized its initial objectives, the two flank battalions were to push east to the final objective. With all three of these pieces of high ground secured, the armor would have a bridgehead through the defenses of the Siegfried Line. It was hoped that the Saar could then be bridged and tank columns driven eastward, deep into the enemy rear. At about 2100 hours the meeting terminated. The infantry battalions and supporting units began their preparations for the crossing.

Following the issuance of the attack order, the regimental com-

mander decided to conduct a personal reconnaissance of the crossing site beyond Ayl and at the same time to select a CP location within the town. As his jeep rolled down the hill toward town, movement could be seen through the darkness on the road ahead. The driver slowed his vehicle, expecting to be challenged by an American sentry. Then, one of the figures in the road became silhouetted—the distinctive outline of a German helmet was clearly visible. Luckily, the enemy was as startled as the colonel and his driver. The jeep was slammed into reverse and a hasty retrograde movement began. Returning to Mannebach, Colonel McClune contacted 10th Armored Division headquarters and was informed that the armored infantry was about to take the town of Ayl.

The regimental kitchen trains had pulled into Mannebach after dark; but before they could begin feeding, orders were received to move to Ayl. In some of the companies, chow lines had already formed and most of the men had liberated chinaware for their first hot meal in days. As the prospects of a good meal faded, the plates were tossed into the streets with a clatter; the troops shouldered their gear.

It was midnight before the leading elements of the 1st Battalion entered Ayl, prepared for any eventuality; but in short order they encountered the armored infantrymen who had taken the town a little while before. Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men then closed into Ayl followed by the 3d Battalion. The 2d Battalion moved into the woods on the hill behind town.

No assault boats had yet arrived, so Colonel McClune again contacted armored division headquarters. He was assured the boats were on the way and would arrive in time for the crossing. Since the fog in the river valley was thick and to avoid any delay once the craft did arrive, the 1st and 3d Battalions moved into position for their respective crossings. 0400 hours, the designated crossing time, came and went. Still there were no boats. Daylight began to break, but heavy fog continued to blanket the river and the surrounding area. Consequently, the troops were held in position. Against the time when the fog would lift, smoke generators were moved forward and placed on call. Late in the morning when the fog began to dispel and the boats had not put in an appearance, the troops were withdrawn to Ayl where they were dispersed in the buildings throughout town. Shortly before noon, a small number of assault craft arrived, but they were insufficient for a crossing operation involving a full infantry regiment and its resupply until such time as a bridge could be constructed.

During the afternoon, General George S. Patton, Jr., U.S. Third

Army commander, visited the 10th Armored command post and was extremely perturbed that the crossing had not been initiated. Several phone calls were made concerning the proposed operation and at 1625 hours orders were received by Colonel McClune to "cross at once."

The smoke generators went into action and soon the river valley in the vicinity of the crossing sites was filled with dense, billowing, white smoke. As the leading companies of each battalion moved to the river, the enemy threw over some harassing artillery and mortar fire and searched the area with automatic weapons. However, the smoke denied all observation.

Then something went wrong and the smoke generators, many of which had been damaged by the constant enemy machine-gun fire, ceased to function one by one. A slight breeze in the valley dispelled the smoke and before long the enemy had unobstructed observation of the crossings. Their OPs registered and every German weapon within range was brought to bear on the American positions. Mortar and artillery fire rained on Companies C, L and the precious river crossing equipment. Captain Brightman of Company L was killed and Lieutenant Cornelius, commanding the 1st Battalion's assault company, was wounded and had to be evacuated. As the tempo of enemy fire increased, all hell broke loose. To avoid a slaughter, the troops were ordered back to Ayl and frantic attempts were made to put the generators back into action. Many of these machines were riddled and useless. In addition, the volume of enemy fire made it almost suicidal for the generator operators to leave the cover of their foxholes. Not a single boat escaped destruction and crossing operations came to a complete halt.

10th Armored Division was informed of the situation and Colonel McClune was requested to estimate the earliest possible time at which he could resume crossing. To this he replied, "One hour after I receive sufficient boats." Additional craft were promised.

At 2130 hours, the second shipment of assault boats began to arrive at Ayl. Fog had again settled in the river valley and conditions seemed ideal for a crossing, which was then scheduled for 2300 hours. The boat convoy slipped through town and east to the junction with the road paralleling the river. There the boats were divided, each of the assault battalions receiving half of the shipment.

As H-hour approached, the advance elements of both battalions again moved out of town. With Company C in the lead, the 1st Battalion marched down the road east of Ayl and into position on the flat, open plain along the river. The 3d Battalion used the road lead-

ing north from town until it reached the small stream northeast of Ayl. Then, leaving the road, it followed the stream down to the Saar. Company L, originally designated as the 3d Battalion assault unit, had suffered heavily on the river bank during the first attempt and as a result, Company I was assigned the lead.

The boats were moved to the river bank where the men who were to man them waited impatiently for the last few minutes before crossing time to tick away. Tension was great and the memory of the effectiveness of the enemy fire during the afternoon made the short delay seem an eternity. Then, suddenly the waiting was over. Down the line came the signal to move forward.

The men jumped for the boats and paddled furiously into the swift-moving stream. For the most part they were inexperienced in handling assault craft and it took considerable time to negotiate the river. As the boats grounded on the east bank, the infantrymen leaped ashore and dashed forward while the engineer boat crews turned their craft about to start back for the second wave.

In Company I's sector there was no initial resistance from the pillboxes that dominated the east bank of the Saar. Lieutenant William R. Jacques, commanding the company, had his assault squads push forward rapidly toward the enemy positions they were scheduled to reduce. Wire was encountered and breached and still there was no fire directed against the company. Pushing farther forward, the assault teams closed on the first pillboxes and began routing out the German defenders. Then the silence was broken as local clashes for individual bunkers began. Most of the enemy defenders quickly yielded, but a few had to be dug out of their concrete emplacements the hard way. It seemed impossible, but the 3d Battalion achieved complete surprise. In an amazingly short time, Company I was atop the sheer cliffs of Irminer Wald. To the south, could be heard the sounds of heavy fighting. Obviously, the 1st Battalion was having no easy time.

As Company C landed on the enemy side of the river, they were greeted by bursts of machine-gun fire; in short order a furious engagement was under way. Lieutenant Chalkley urged his company forward into the foggy area along the river bank, through which the final protective line fire of the enemy machine guns crossed and recrossed. Visibility was so poor it was impossible for the Germans manning the pillboxes to pick up the riflemen as they filtered forward. Carefully watching the patterns of fire, the troops advanced in individual rushes between bursts of fire. Gradually the enemy began to pound the area with the inevitable mortar and artillery fire always at his command.

The assault squads closed in on pillboxes one after another. It was slow, dangerous work but the attack was pressed relentlessly. Gradually, as more and more pillboxes were taken the slender beachhead expanded.

Meanwhile, on the far shore, Colonel McClune decided to personally check the progress of the operation. Leaving his CP in Ayl, he moved toward the river. En route the regimental commander's jeep was caught in a terrific mortar concentration and Colonel McClune, his driver, Corporal John R. Hills, and his radio operator, Technician Fourth Grade Richard J. Scheibner took cover in the ditches along the road. Here the colonel was wounded in both legs. While Corporals Hill and Scheibner were attempting to locate a medic, the regimental commander was wounded again, this time in the chest. After first aid had been applied, the CO was evacuated and Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, the regimental executive officer, took command of the 376th.

The enemy fire on the 1st Battalion's crossing site increased and shell fragment hits on the assault boats materially reduced the number of craft in operating condition. As the 3d Platoon of Company C, under Technical Sergeant Jack C. Wallace, advanced up the steep slope of the hill south of Ockfen against stubborn resistance, Company B began crossing in the few boats that remained unscathed by the intense concentrations falling on the crossing site and in the river.

Downstream, Company I made its way to the top of the ridge north of Ockfen and Company K crossed, closely followed by Company L. Harassing machine-gun fire was being received from the pillboxes south of Schoden; but due to the fog this fire was inaccurate, causing only a few casualties. Atop the hill Company I captured a German messenger bearing orders for a battery of Russian 76.2mm guns. Using this prisoner as a guide, a party started for the gun positions. Totally unaware of the situation, the enemy artillerymen were captured while at chow. As the battalion closed on top of Irminer Wald, it organized a perimeter defense.

Lieutenant Colonel Martin's 2d Battalion, charged with the capture of Ockfen, followed the 3d Battalion, crossing at the northern site. They received some harassing machine-gun fire and a few rounds of artillery. However, the weight of the enemy fire was directed against the crossing to the south. Company F led, closely followed by the remainder of the battalion which completed crossing by 0400 hours.

The 2d Battalion planned to move against Ockfen with two companies. Companies E and F were chosen for the mission and with the

latter leading, the column moved up the river, turned east, deployed and approached the town. Because of the smoke and fog, visibility was limited to a matter of feet. Control was difficult and progress slow. In the lower units there were several instances of groups returning with prisoners being mistaken for the enemy and fired upon. Little by little the assault moved forward, down the valley and into the town.

With the coming of dawn it became lighter in the foggy valley and the problem of clearing Ockfen, house by house, was simplified in some small degree. Suddenly, at 0945 hours when part of the town had been cleared, the rumble of tanks was heard. The noise grew louder and enemy armor and infantry pushed into Ockfen from the south and east. Throwing lead in all directions, the tanks roared forward. It was evidently a large scale offensive, for the German infantry was supported by no less than sixteen panzers. As the bazooka teams went into action, the German tankers concentrated fire on the buildings in which the teams had taken position, attempting to blast them into oblivion. The armored vehicles roamed the streets of Ockfen pouring fire into every likely looking building. In the face of this strong counterattack, orders were issued for a withdrawal to the hill north of town. Here the companies re-formed for a new attack.

At the southern crossing site, there were no boats in operating condition by the time Company B had completed its crossing. Company A, held at the road junction east of Ayl while Company B crossed, was suffering heavy casualties from the mortar and artillery fire falling in the area. The only cover available was the water-filled ditches along the road and in these the troops had taken shelter. Lacking a means of crossing at the southern site, the company moved north to follow the 2d Battalion. When Company A arrived at the northern crossing at 0500 hours, the fog was still extremely heavy. Guided by flashlights, the assault boats moved to the west bank and the unit loaded.

Staff Sergeant Robert J. Pailliotet, who crossed in one of the first boats, was anxiously waiting the arrival of the rest of his platoon when a boat nosed ashore. Its occupants were a bit slow about disembarking, so the sergeant reached into the boat and grabbed the nearest man by the arm, exclaiming: "Goddammit, are you going to get out or not?" The sergeant was completely unaware he was addressing Lieutenant Colonel Miner, his battalion commander.

When the company completed crossing, it moved south along the railroad tracks and re-joined the 1st Battalion, taking positions on the right flank, next to the river. In vain, the battalion attempted to push





*As enemy shells burst near them, men of the 376th Infantry work their way across open ground preparatory to moving into the bridgehead*

forward along the top of the hill which was their initial objective. Fire from the line of pillboxes on the eastern end of the flat, open ridge stopped each advance.

Company C had started the operation with only two officers and both of these were wounded before the end of the day. When Lieutenant Chalkley was evacuated, Technical Sergeant Thomas D. Huthnance took command of the company directing the attack until Captain Malinski could come forward from battalion to assume command.

With the foot elements of the regiment across the river, two things remained to be done. Ockfen, from which the 2d Battalion had withdrawn, had to be retaken and the regimental objective, east of the town, had to be seized. Careful plans were laid for driving the enemy tanks out of town and as Lieutenant Colonel Martin's men moved against Ockfen, the 3d Battalion was to push to Scharfenberg Ridge. By way of preparation for the new attack, eight battalions of artillery ranging in caliber from 105s to 240s serenaded Ockfen at 1345 hours. Their TOT hit town with an earth-shattering crash and the artillerymen kept the volume of fire at a peak. The proposed barrage was to be of ten minutes' duration, but after half that time had elapsed it became necessary to issue a cease-fire order for the shelling had begun to affect the troops of the 2d Battalion who were within five hundred yards of the target. Concerning this fire, the enemy later said: "A tremendous artillery barrage landed on the town literally lifting it off its foundation and piling it in its own streets."

Even before the artillery fire had completely lifted, the leading elements of Companies E and F were working their way down the hill toward town. As they advanced, they could hear those German tanks which survived the TOT pulling out to the east. Clearing the town proved a simple matter for the artillerymen had done their work well. Ockfen was a shambles and several of the ruined buildings had started to burn. Of the enemy remaining alive, most were shocked and dazed with little fight left in them. One six-man squad of Company E took seventy-one prisoners with little difficulty. By 1630 hours the entire town was cleared. Men of the Mine Platoon of Antitank Company entered town close behind the infantry and soon had the eastern approaches to Ockfen well mined, to prevent another thrust by enemy armor. A heavy volume of fire was received from the pillboxes south-east of Ockfen and enemy snipers beyond the town also proved troublesome.

Company G, which had remained on the high ground to the north

as the rest of the battalion advanced against Ockfen, was to protect the northern flank of the battalion after Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men moved to seize the regimental objective. In addition Company G was to take the castle midway down the winding trail which led from the top of Irminer Wald to Ockfen. As dusk fell, the company less a security detachment moved over the crest of the hill and made its way through the vineyards to the castle. Having witnessed the artillery preparation on the town below them, the Germans holding this position were more than willing to surrender. Following this, Company G returned to the hill and set up a defensive line in the woods on the crest.

With Company K leading, the 3d Battalion moved against the regimental objective. It advanced rapidly along the top of the wooded ridge, in single file with only light flank protection. A pillbox on the crest was taken and two men were left to guard the prisoners in the box as the battalion pushed forward. Gradually, the ridge dropped away to the valley below. Early in the evening, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men moved across this valley in the moonlight and ascended Scharfenberg Ridge, the regimental objective. The crest of this second ridge was known to be a maze of enemy pillboxes, so the battalion commander set up a perimeter defense for the night on the northern nose of the high ground.

Remembering the days in Nennig, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston was deeply concerned with the necessity of keeping open a route of supply to the rear. With this in mind, early the following morning, Company L was sent back to the hill north of Ockfen and charged with the mission of protecting the route along the ridge. This proved a wise move, for when the other two battalions were unable to advance and contact the 3d, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men were virtually isolated on the regimental objective, with only this slender line of communication to the rear.

The following three days proved extremely difficult for the 376th. Although the regiment had seized all the assigned hills in the bridge-head area, the enemy retained observation of the bridge site from the pillboxes south of Schoden. These boxes employed an almost continuous rain of machine-gun fire which punctured pontons and riddled bridging equipment as fast as the engineers hauled it to the river. Moreover, the enemy artillery was doing its share toward making the area untenable. Every attempt by the engineers to erect a bridge met with failure and heavy casualties. With much difficulty, a ferry was





*Cases of K rations destined for the 3d Battalion, 376th Infantry, are lashed to packboards by members of a carrying party*

maintained in operation and on this a small number of vehicles were transported across the Saar. For the most part though, supplies were brought over by assault boats and moved to the companies by carrying parties.

Most difficult units to resupply were those elements of the 3d Battalion, all but surrounded, on the regimental objectives. Men from Company M, the Battalion Headquarters Company and other available personnel were formed into two groups. One of these teams on the west bank of the Saar would load themselves with rations, ammunition or other items needed by Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men, dash to the river when a boat was ready and paddle as quickly as possible to the far shore. While crossing, they were continuously subjected to accurate machine-gun fire from the enemy pillboxes downstream. Once on the east bank, the teams would haul their burdens up the steep hill north of Ockfen to the positions held by Companies G and L. There, the second group would take over the supplies and start down the ridge, across the fire-swept valley and up to the 3d Battalion positions on Scharfenberg Ridge. The first night, as the later group started down to the valley from the ridge, the Germans spotted the unpainted ration boxes they were carrying and opened fire with auto-

matic weapons. Hitting the dirt the party speedily camouflaged the wooden containers. On the return trip, wounded were brought back over this same precarious route. The second night, after the carrying party crossed the stream in the valley, it was hit by an artillery concentration and the men took cover in an antitank ditch which they shared with a general officer of the 10th Armored Division until things quieted down.

After establishing its lines atop the ridge, Company G dispatched patrols which encountered Germans at every turn. By some odd chance, the 3d Battalion had slipped through the enemy defenses in what amounted to a mass infiltration. On the 24th, Company G moved forward to clear the woods atop Irminer Wald. This occupied most of the day. When the new positions were assumed, the understrength Company found that in some cases foxholes were as much as one hundred yards apart. There were no blankets and the nights were still extremely cold. Food was scarce and captured German rations were put to good use.

Meanwhile, the situation of those elements of the 3d Battalion on the regimental objective became more acute as the enemy directed increasing amounts of artillery and mortar fire against Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men. A German machine gun crew infiltrated between Companies I and K, effectively severing contact between the two units for a time. Captain Ralph T. Brown of Company K finally worked his way into a good firing position and eliminated this enemy group with an M1.

When it was found that the carrying parties were unable to bring forward sufficient supplies to maintain the troops on Scharfenberg Ridge, artillery liaison planes were pressed into service for vertical re-supply. The Cubs made trip after trip, dropping food, ammunition, radio batteries and medical supplies. As the planes swooped low over the American positions for a drop, the Germans would send up a hail of lead from every available weapon. On one occasion, two ME-109s jumped the aerial column. Only the maneuverability and slow air speed of the tiny planes protected them from the speedy German fighters. While most of the twenty Piper Cubs that participated in these operations had scars to prove the accuracy of the enemy's fire, not a single plane was lost.

On the afternoon of the 25th, Company B of the 61st Armored

Infantry Battalion was attached to the 2d Battalion. Along with the 3d and 4th Platoons of Company F it was ordered to attack Schoden and the enemy pillboxes harassing the bridge site from south of that town. The armored infantry company worked north along the river and, after some heavy fighting, forced its way into the southern edge of the objective. To the right, Captain Frederick D. Standish led the Company F group along the railroad tracks through a more heavily fortified area. As they advanced, their right flank was exposed to the fire of a series of enemy pillboxes on the high ground east of Schoden. Progress was slow and only after bitter fighting were the first pillboxes in their zone taken. Following this, attempts were made to reestablish contact with the attached company on the left. Just about dusk, a column of Germans was seen coming down the railroad tracks. Knowing that the armored infantrymen were farther to the north, it was assumed the Germans were PWs being moved to the rear. This column was almost on top of the security force outposting the pillbox in which about half of the party was resting, before the group realized that the Germans were not prisoners. Fighting developed at extremely close quarters and the numerically superior enemy breached the American defenses. The Germans surrounded the pillbox and Captain Standish's repeated attempts to fight through the enemy and get his men out of the surrounded box were of no avail.

Meanwhile, the 1st and 2d Platoons of Company F were in Ockfen. Having been heavily hit by enemy artillery the previous night, they were relieved late in the afternoon for a short rest. When word was received that Captain Standish and the remainder of the company were in trouble, the platoons organized and proceeded north. A small security group moved up the east side of the railroad to protect the right flank, while the bulk of the small force advanced west of the tracks. The relief party succeeded in breaking through the German perimeter and fought its way up a communication trench to the American held pillbox. The group then discovered that it was against the rear of a huge box; facing a blank, concrete wall. Both sides of the fortification were receiving continuous streams of grazing machine-gun fire from five or more weapons which spelled each other in raking the box. Attempts were made to talk to the trapped men, but it was impossible to establish contact through walls of concrete six feet thick.

At the same time, the enemy was working on the front of the pillbox in an effort to induce the trapped men to surrender. When this failed, the Germans employed a bazooka which did no damage to the well constructed fortification. A large demolition charge was next placed in



an embrasure of the pillbox by the enemy, and at 0145 hours there was a terrific explosion. Groans and cries of agony followed. There was a period of silence followed by the sound of movement north along the railroad tracks. Repeated attempts by the relief party to move around the position were stopped cold by the enemy's grazing fire. At 0300 hours, the flank security of the relief party was forced from position and nothing remained but for the 1st and 2d Platoons to withdraw.

Months later, after the termination of hostilities, First Sergeant Bower, in a personal letter to Staff Sergeant Shafto of Company F, gave a complete account of this action from the viewpoint of the defenders of the pillbox. The following is quoted from this letter.

32 W. Van Buren St.  
Oswego, New York  
13 June 45

Dear Harold:

Received your letter today and I sure was waiting for it. Thought maybe you had writers cramp. Of course, you're excused this time, as I know you must be busy.

Well, Shafto, it makes me feel better *now* to hear that you tried to get us out of the pillbox that fateful night. I will tell you just what happened.

The first thing, we did not have enough security out and what was out, was not out far enough from the CP . . . I could not get communication with the battalion at that time as the radio [SCR-300] was smashed by a grenade and the operator was hit in the stomach. I had talked to Colonel Martin and told him they were attacking from the right and front, down the railroad. We had quite a few casualties and no aid man. The artillery officer also was hit. Our men did not get out in time . . . as they left the pillbox they were hit. I don't know who was killed. There were some, as the bodies were outside the pillbox. We had about twenty-two or twenty-five in the pillbox. You know they never got us until 0130. Our ammunition gave out but we would not let them in the pillbox. They blew two holes in it and threw concussion grenades at us all night. The last thing they threw at us stunned us and we never fired a shot after it went off and they came storming in. I sure would have liked to know what it was. You know after our 300 radio went out, I tried to contact Company CO with 536 every half hour up to 0100—I tried, but to no avail. They had both entrances to the pillbox covered—we were holed up like rats. By the way I have said many times since, if I ever run into the medic, a T/5—can't think of his name—I would smack him. We had to tear our undershirts for bandages . . . when we needed him, he was not there. It was a hell of a mess, Harold, men crying and screaming. I had a hard time as most of them wanted to give up, and I thought sure we would have been freed from that trap . . . All we had left was a few tracers when they blew that last hole in the pillbox.

As soon as we came out of the pillbox, they knocked off our helmets, searched us and stripped us of everything. Mortar fire was hitting all around. One went off just six feet from where I was standing. Two Krauts beside me got it and I dove into a trench right on top of the Krauts. They raised hell. I guess maybe I hurt them, as though I cared. It is just like a dream that you want to forget.

I could have escaped the first night, but we had to carry our wounded . . . even then we did not get half of them. I guess they [the Germans] carried them out. There were a lot of Krauts all through the woods in the rear. We hiked three days and two nights back and forth through the woods, never on any roads. It was all hell. Nothing to eat or smoke.

Do you know, Shafto, you say I am too old for the Infantry. Well, I am. But, as a prisoner I stood up better than the young ones. And I had those shoepacs and they just about ruined my feet. Never got any shoes until after we were liberated. You know my socks wore out and I was wearing them with no socks at all. There were quite a few of us in the same condition. Sure was hell, as we were hiking all the time I was a prisoner and nothing to eat. I passed out twice but a lot of the boys passed out every day. Krauts would wait until we came to and then it was up on your feet and catch up to the rear of the column. We were strafed three times by our planes. Guess I must have had a horseshoe . . . to get back without a scratch, outside of an infected foot. Still got scars from it. Am having a nice time here, peace and quiet. Don't let anybody tell you this isn't God's country . . .

Well, Harold, I never was much of a hand in writing letters, as you know, but I could write pages . . . Give my regards to all of the boys that are left. Also officers, Colonel Martin, Captains Whitman and Standish in particular.

By the way, ————— took a fit in the pillbox that night. He was a mess. Took two of us to hold him down and he was throwing up all over—what a mess. He finally came out of it. You know, Shafto, I could not give up all that. Am taking a double shot of Four Roses now in remembrance of our many good times together . . . Hope to have some more as soon as time permits. How about it, old boy? Another thing, your letter sure made me feel good . . . Don't stop writing.

Sincerely,

TOP

P. S. Excuse writing as I am nervous as hell. Don't forget our reunion in New York City. Could never find out anything about McGuinness. I guess he is done for, may God bless him, sure was a good sport and a damn good soldier.

During these operations, Lieutenant Colonel Martin, the battalion commander, and Major John R. Dossenbach, the executive officer, were both wounded while working forward to check on the progress of the attack. Captain Standish, in some unknown manner, made his way from the battle position, through the German line, while in a complete state of shock brought on by days of exhaustive fighting during which he drove himself relentlessly. He was found wandering about in a dazed condition.

For the regiment this was a period of low ebb. On the night of the 25th, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson informed General Malony of the situation existing within his command in hope that Division might be able to extend some help, even though the 376th was still attached to the 10th Armored Division. The message read:

Our lines are so extended that we cannot prevent enemy infiltration. Enemy occupied pillboxes still exist inside our bridgehead. All troops have been committed since the first day of the operation. I have no reserve. One company of armored infantry has been attached temporarily. Except for two platoons of tank destroyers on the friendly side of the river, we have no support of heavy direct fire weapons. It is expected that these two platoons will be withdrawn tomorrow. Until 1900 this date, all evacuation and supply has been hand-carried. One weasel and seven jeeps may be able to cross tonight. At present, all ferry service is out of order. I expect that all heavy trucks, prime-movers, cannon and artillery weapons will have to cross the Saar at your bridgehead. If so, this will be a critical period for the infantry battalions, and they must be reinforced and supplied by another unit. If we cross all vehicles here it will take two to three days and place the vehicles in an area getting observed artillery fire. In our beachhead we have captured about sixty per cent of the pillboxes, one 88mm gun, one battery of mountain artillery, and 452 prisoners. Estimated killed, seven hundred. Since the 21st of February I have lost 14 officers and 161 enlisted men. I am understrength 47 officers and 506 enlisted men. I recommend that this combat team be passed through, if the 94th Division is to continue the attack to the north. If the 94th Division is to protect the Saarburg crossing, I recommend that this combat team be reinforced to hold its present position. Such reinforcement should include tank destroyers and infantry.

The following day the 3d Platoon of Company E, supported by one tank was ordered to retake the area in which the platoons of Company F had been overwhelmed, and conduct a thorough search for any personnel still holding out. Without too much trouble the first pillbox tackled was taken, but a second position put up a stiff fight. The Germans defending the area directed the fire of all their available weapons against the supporting tank. When the tank commander was wounded, Technician Fifth Grade Paul E. Ramsey, fearlessly exposing himself to the intense enemy fire, dashed to the vehicle, administered aid to the injured man and then took command of the tank. He directed its fire against the weapons holding up the advance and radioed the situation to the rear. In the last box taken by the platoon, one soldier of Company F was found. By this time the strength of the attackers was so low, it was impossible to hold the bitterly contested position. Therefore, the remnants of the platoon moved back to the original lines held by the battalion.

On the morning of the 25th, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson had received orders to launch a determined attack to the south, to link up with the 3d Battalion, 301st, in the vicinity of Beurig. This would join the two bridgeheads, thus eliminating the southern flank of the 376th Infantry and clearing the Saarburg area of German fire to permit the construction of a bridge connecting Saarburg and Beurig. Obviously, the 1st Battalion would have to launch this attack since it was in position south of Ockfen. When the remnants of Company A were concentrated, the rest of Lieutenant Colonel Miner's battalion was stretched to the breaking point along its rugged front. The company attacked south along the river only to be met by a hail of machine-gun fire from American positions west of the Saar. When the gunners realized their mistake and lifted fire, the company moved down the hill toward the enemy-held pillboxes in the valley. Tank destroyers across the river opened fire against the German positions, and Lieutenant Edwin R. Flynn, leading the group, was wounded. He hobbled back to battalion, using his carbine as a cane, after Staff Sergeant Edward J. Macejak had assumed command. The assault party then pushed forward to the side of the first box while the TDs across the river continued to assist the operation with their fire. To add to the difficulty of the situation, the Germans manning the pillbox under attack called for mortar fire. With his bazooka, Private First Class Robert S. Scheer scored a direct hit on one of the embrasures, injuring an enemy machine gunner and destroying his weapon. The box then surrendered and the company moved south where more pillboxes were taken. When darkness fell a defensive line was formed where the Ockfen-Beurig road crossed the railroad tracks.

The next morning the entire 1st Battalion jumped off at 0500 hours encountering only light resistance. Unknown to Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men, the Germans had retreated during the night following the advance of American armored columns into Irsch, through the zone of the rest of the Division. The advance continued and the battalion pushed into the northern edge of Beurig. House by house, the search of the town began. The battalion rounded up a few Germans and about noon made contact with Major O'Neil's men, who had entered Beurig from the south.

When the vehicles of the 10th Armored Division moved south to cross the treadway bridges at Taben and Serrig, the armored infantry battalions were sent into the 376th bridgehead to clear the pillbox area southeast of Ockfen which had held up the advance of the 1st





*With all possible speed, pillboxes were completely demolished*

and 3d Battalions of the 376th. The armored infantry was then to continue the attack and join the tankers in Irsch. It was this action that permitted the concentration of the 1st Battalion for the attack to Beurig.

While the 3d Battalion on Scharfenberg Ridge was waiting to be passed through by the armored infantry, an enemy patrol approached from Company K's rear. It was almost upon the company before it realized they were Germans. At point-blank range, the troops opened fire, killing or wounding all of the enemy party. Later the armored infantry moved into the area, checked on the situation and pushed through the woods west of Hill 426 on the southern nose of Scharfenberg Ridge. This released a good deal of the pressure on Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's battalion. As the armored columns continued east through Irsch the situation further improved. For the first time in three days, the battalion had only one front with which to concern itself. Late in the afternoon of the 26th, American troops swarmed up from the south. It was the 3d Battalion, 302d. Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's exhausted companies were soon relieved by the 3d Battalion, 301st, which came forward from Beurig for this purpose.

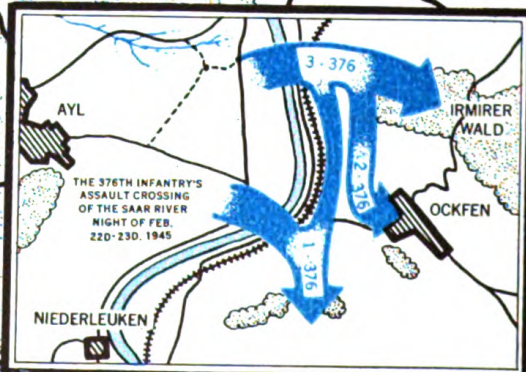
During these operations, Companies G and L had doggedly held the hill north of Ockfen and the supply route along the ridge. The enemy constantly directed heavy mortar and artillery barrages against their positions. On one occasion, an American strongpoint was pounded all night and half of its twenty-two defenders were wounded. On another occasion, two men of Company G's machine-gun section trailed a seven-man German patrol through the darkness and succeeded in capturing it.

On the 27th of February, the 1st Battalion passed through Company L and the positions of Company E in the area along the river. The battalion attacked north, seized Schoden and relieved Company B of the 61st Armored Infantry Battalion from the positions in which they had been isolated for two days. Forty-two pillboxes were taken during this drive.

By this time the strength of the 1st Battalion was extremely low and in Company A it became necessary to use men of the Weapons Platoon as riflemen. When two of these men detailed to Staff Sergeant W. T. Pillow's platoon were captured by a German patrol, Sergeant Pillow, with the remainder of the platoon covering his movement, slipped down a communication trench, overtook the withdrawing Germans



A horizontal number line with tick marks at 0 and 1. Below the line, a curly bracket spans the distance from 0 to 1, with the word "MILES" written underneath it.



and recaptured his men. He then talked the Germans into arranging the surrender of the rest of their unit, and marched back with an entire enemy platoon under surveillance.

The following day the battalion's advance continued; by nightfall, Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men were on the high ground overlooking Wiltingen. In two days the battalion had advanced two thousand yards and taken thirteen pillboxes.

On the 28th the 3d Battalion, after a good night's rest in Ockfen, passed through Company G to push across the open ridge into the woods. By late in the afternoon they were abreast of the 1st Battalion and in position overlooking the Wiltingen-Oberemmel road. Across the road, and the valley through which it ran, there rose a steep hill with a ridgelike crest paralleling the battalion's front. The south side of the slope, facing the battalion, was terraced and planted with vineyards. In the middle of one of these was a long bare swath cut by a P-47, which lay in a crumpled heap where it had crashed. This hill, called le Scharzberg, was the battalion's immediate objective and had to be occupied that night. A platoon of Company K and a section of heavy machine guns were assigned the task. The designated group made its way up the steep slope and was just approaching the crest when enemy forces on the hill opened fire. Hastily, one of the HMGs went into action, hitting a German carrying a load of flares. He went up in a multi-colored blaze of light. After a short battle, the position was taken and all its defenders with the exception of one officer captured. This officer escaped down the reverse slope and a short time later mortar fire began to fall. It was impossible to dig in on the rocky crest, but since the ground had to be held, the men remained on the exposed position. The shelling continued and casualties were frequent. In an attempt to silence the enemy weapons, an artillery observer was sent to the crest. He and his radio operator were soon wounded and both had to be evacuated. A second observer came forward, but all attempts to silence the German mortars proved unsuccessful. On the following morning Lieutenant Colonel Thurston climbed the hill to congratulate personally each man on the position for his splendid stand. Of the thirty-eight men who had taken this high ground less than half came through the night unharmed.

On the morning of the 1st of March a patrol from the A&P Platoon was sent out to contact Company L. Taking a wrong turn, this party moved into Wiltingen where they encountered Germans. As soon as the mistake was realized the group withdrew. Following this, a patrol

from Company K was sent into the town. They entered it as loud speakers west of the Saar began blasting surrender orders to the people of Wiltingen. The American Psychological Warfare personnel informed the local inhabitants that their situation was hopeless; an American armored division was in their rear and all lines of supply and communication had been severed. As signs of surrender, the townspeople were instructed to display white flags from their houses and report to the village church without delay. If they did not capitulate, they were informed that their town would be blasted into rubble. As German civilians flocked into the streets, Wiltingen was occupied without a single shot being fired. While the Company K patrol searched prisoners in the center of town, Company E entered from the south where Major Dossenbach's battalion had passed through the 1st Battalion.

To the north of town was a maze of pillboxes; interrogation of prisoners taken revealed that these positions were manned. Sergeant Rao persuaded a PW from the German company manning these fortifications to talk his companions into surrendering. Both Companies E and G moved forward, and by the end of the day were 1,500 yards beyond Wiltingen, having cleared twenty-five pillboxes.

The 3d Battalion also continued its advance. Outside Oberemmel it encountered the 90th Reconnaissance Squadron, which was maintaining contact between the 302d and 376th Infantry. Then the battalion pushed into the woods, clearing out snipers and machine-gun positions. Their objective was Kommlingen. The night was so dark the troops had to clasp hands to keep from losing each other. When they reached the far edge of the woods they halted until daylight. In the darkness a squad of Company K took position in the area of one of the squads of Company L, with neither aware of the others presence.

On the morning of the 2d, while the battalion was preparing to attack Kommlingen, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston, Captain Di Lorenzo, and nine men of Company L entered the town. There was no resistance and, by radio, the command group instructed the battalion to move forward at once. Meanwhile, a patrol from Company G entered Kommlingen from the northwest to make contact with the CO of the 3d Battalion and his reconnaissance party. The remainder of the 2d Battalion continued forward and Company F cleared the Filzen Peninsula. During the day Major Dossenbach's battalion took a bag of fifty-nine prisoners and was approaching Konz-Karthaus before it was halted by heavy fire.



*For gallantry in action, Lieutenant Perry Heidelberger, Jr., receives the Silver Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster from the Division Commander*

The regiment now held all its objectives except a small group of pillboxes on the southern edge of Konz. Attack after attack was thrown at this area only to be repulsed by a large box with a revolving steel turret, known to the Germans as No. 111. In these thrusts, Company F suffered heavily. When TDs were brought forward for direct fire missions against No. 111, their shells failed to penetrate; moreover, the fields of fire of the Germans defending this huge pillbox were perfectly sited on all approaches and a mortar encased within the fortifications plastered the area incessantly.

After one of the attacks, medics worked forward to remove the wounded from the field. Lieutenant Heidelberger, using the cover of a communication trench, advanced to a position from which he could engage the enemy in conversation. He convinced them of the hopelessness of their position and negotiated a surrender. The Germans agreed but made one stipulation. They would capitulate, but to no one less than a field officer. With all possible speed Major Dossenbach came forward and accepted their surrender. One German major, two captains, two lieutenants and fifty-nine enlisted men were taken from the pillbox which was an elaborate affair, described by the Division



Commander when he investigated it as "a sunken concrete submarine." It housed a 50mm belt-fed mortar capable of putting more than twenty-five rounds in the air at one time. This box was three stories deep, equipped with Diesel motors which supplied light and heat. No. 111 had shower facilities and boasted both hot and cold running water. Equipped with shoulder stocks for accuracy, its machine-guns had perfect fields of observation and grazing fire in all directions. It was the most elaborate pillbox ever to fall to the Division.

When the 1st Battalion was passed through by Major Dossenbach's men on the morning of the 1st, it moved back into Schoden where its opportunity for rest was short lived. The 10th Armored Division needed infantry assistance in Trier and shortly after midnight the battalion started forward by motor. It moved east and then north through the night, over second-grade roads, to outflank Trier and strike at the city from the east. Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men were to fight through to a task force from CCA, which had forced its way into Trier seizing one of the vital river bridges across the Moselle. Exact whereabouts of the tankers was unknown.

Missing the turnoff at Pellingen, the kitchen train, which was bringing up the rear of the column, went sailing down the ridge road to Trier. It entered the outskirts of town, stopping a few hundred yards from an enemy manned roadblock which was covered by the fire of an 88mm gun. Discovering its mistake, the kitchen train withdrew.

The rest of the battalion rolled into the little town of Irsch, a few miles east of Trier, and began detrucking as dawn broke. A 10th Armored Division messenger located Lieutenant Colonel Miner at about this time and handed him orders to "just keep going." Company A, leading the column, was instructed to proceed straight into Trier. The men were cold and tired from the all-night ride, but marching soon started the blood circulating again. Not knowing what might lie ahead, the leading elements entered the city cautiously. There was practically no opposition and the tempo of the advance quickened. As the column pushed into town, a few men were detailed to make a cursory search of each house. This soon proved impractical; the company advanced with a file on either side of the street.

As Company A approached a bridge over the railroad tracks in Trier, a reconnaissance patrol was sent forward to investigate the span. It located a German automatic weapon in position and while one of the patrol was endeavoring to talk the machine-gun crew, on the far side of the bridge, into surrendering, a recent replacement let go a shot.



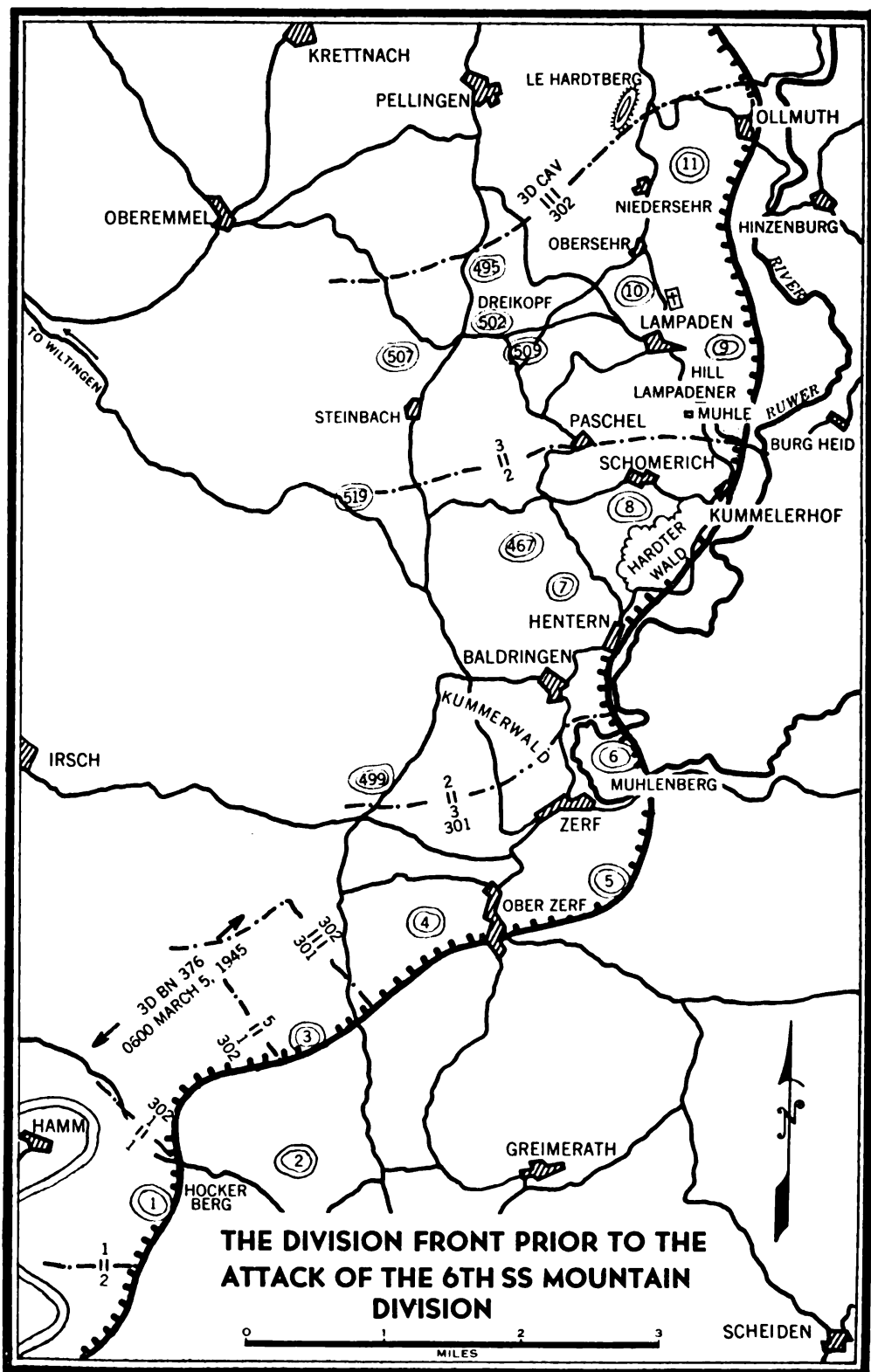
*The bridge over the Moselle at Trier*

Promptly the enemy machine-gun crew went into action, pinning down the patrol and skipping lead in the direction of the rest of the company. At the same time 88mm fire hit the unit inflicting several casualties and killing Private First Class Bernard Redner, one of the company aid men. There was no possible way of flanking the enemy, so a Sherman was borrowed from a tank company of the 10th Armored located in the vicinity. By this means, the machine gun was eliminated. Then the battalion followed the tank company, which moved rapidly through town to the Moselle. By noon of March 2, 1945 Trier was cleared. On the following day the 376th Infantry reverted to control of the 94th.

After twelve days of heavy fighting, the capture of Trier climaxed the period of the Division's greatest success. Perhaps the highest tribute paid General Malony's men for their bloody work from February 19 to March 2, 1945, came quite fittingly from the lips of the enemy. *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Goering, in an interrogation following his capture, stated:

When the first break in the Siegfried Line was made near Aachen, Der Führer was very irritated. After that came the breakthrough near Trier, and that was wholly incomprehensible. We could not believe that these fortifications could be penetrated. The breakthrough near Trier was particularly depressing. That breakthrough and the capture of the Remagen bridge were two great catastrophies for the German cause.





## Chapter 36: LAMPADEN RIDGE

THE MORNING OF MARCH 3, 1945 found the 94th holding a vastly extended bridgehead across the Saar. Attached to the division, the 3d Cavalry Group held the left flank from Tarforst to Franzenheim; the 3d Battalion, 302d, was in the vicinity of Lampaden; the 2d Battalion, 302d, held Schomerich, Hentern and Baldringen; the 3d Battalion, 301st, was in position around Zerf and Ober Zerf; the 5th Ranger Battalion continued to hold Hill 3; the 1st Battalion, 302d, was located between the Rangers and the Ruwer River; the 1st Battalion, 301st, perched on Hocker Hill; the 2d Battalion, 301st, held the extreme right of the line down to the Saar. The 94th Reconnaissance Troop patrolled the area south of Taben, between the bridgehead and the left of the 26th Division, maintaining defensive positions west of the Saar and in the Saarlautern bridgehead. To the north of General Malony's zone, the 10th Armored Division continued its drive northeast from Trier along the banks of the Moselle.

Along the Division front enemy activity was comparatively light. German patrols hit the line at several points, but in all cases were repelled. There was a fair amount of artillery, mortar and rocket fire within the Division area; Taben, the Taben bridge site, Hocker Hill, Zerf and Lampaden received the heaviest concentrations. All along the long front, the troops of the Division improved their positions: Foxholes were deepened, weapons cleaned and checked, mines laid and wire entanglements erected. Reconnaissance parties probed the enemy lines, examined the banks of the Ruwer River and maintained contact with the units to their flanks.

Meanwhile the Germans were frantically organizing their defenses and forming *Kampfgruppe* units from the shattered remnants of the 416th Infantry Division, the 256th Volksgrenadier Division and surviving personnel of the various fortress battalions, reinforcement battalions, alarm companies and rear echelon units that had been thrown into the fray. Most of the 2d Mountain Division had arrived from the Bitche area and was sent directly into the lines.

Late in the afternoon of the 3d, Company L of the 301st captured two prisoners from whom it learned that the enemy planned an attack on Hill 5 the following morning. These PWs were from the 13th Company of the 137th Mountain Regiment, 2d Mountain Division. They claimed the attack would be launched from along the Zerf-Weiskirchen road by the III Battalion of their regiment, supported by 20mm, 75mm and 105mm artillery weapons. Later in the day Company I took two prisoners who confirmed this story, and Company K

captured a man who revealed the attack was scheduled for 0330 hours. Major O'Neill alerted his entire command and at the same time informed Division of the information he had gained. Company L on Hill 5 was in serious condition. It was holding the German objective with a scant fifty-four men and for the past three days had been continuously pounded by enemy artillery. All three understrength platoons were dug in on the southern slope of the hill in a crescent-like position, reinforced with the remains of the company's Weapons Platoon and a section of HMGs. Company L had received about forty reinforcements, but the bulk of this group had been held in Zerf under the first sergeant, since the constant rain of enemy fire on the forward positions made the construction of additional emplacements impractical.

As casualties occurred on the hill, reinforcements sufficient to keep all foxholes fully manned were brought forward. During the night of the 3d, both heavy machine guns and one of the lights were knocked out. In addition, in the Weapons Platoon there remained only one of the three 60mm mortars. Lieutenant Henley, who was in command of the company, moved from foxhole to foxhole encouraging and reassuring his men. Countless times he narrowly escaped being wounded and his overcoat was torn by shell fragments in several places.

About 0430 hours enemy fire on the hill increased and the overdue German attack got under way. With a deadly hail of fire from their M1s and BARs, the riflemen of the company met the oncoming mountaineers. This stopped the German infantry, but two self-propelled guns supporting the attack moved right up to the American line. When Private First Class Frank A. Franchino tried to use his bazooka on these vehicles, he found it useless because of a huge hole torn in the side of the tube. Meeting no serious opposition, the assault guns fired a couple of colored flares, then moved over the crest. Two more enemy self-propelled guns moved forward and all four weapons engaged the pair of American TDs on the hill, neither of which was equipped with night sights. In the meantime, the 3d Platoon had been forced to give way. Lieutenant Henley, seeing the Germans moving in on his command post went back to Zerf to bring up the reinforcements as a counterattacking force.

Several enemy infantrymen following the leading assault gun came upon Lieutenant Sylvester M. Beyer, a 356th Field Artillery forward observer, Technician Fourth Grade Paul E. Neuman and Sergeant Harry C. Gersbaugh, in the hole being used as the company CP. They captured the three Americans and moved them a short distance down the hill for questioning. When the trio refused to divulge any military

information, one of the Germans used a *Schmeisser* on them. Sergeant Neuman was killed and the other two men wounded. About this time Private Irving S. Clemens of the 1st Platoon noticed the group and opened fire with his BAR. In the confusion Lieutenant Beyer, whose stomach was riddled with bullets, made a break reaching the foxhole of Staff Sergeant Roy V. Urban. The Germans pursued the wounded officer only to be knocked off by Sergeant Urban's Luger pistol. Private First Class Robert D. Hanlon attempted to administer first aid, but the Lieutenant refused treatment until a call was made to lift the American artillery fire which by that time was pounding the hill. Unprotected by their infantry and exposed to the artillery still falling on the position the assault guns withdrew.

In Zerf, Major O'Neill had sent for Lieutenant Leon P. Johnson and his platoon of Company G, 301st, which was in reserve at Bruchsmühle and had been made available, and was preparing to send forward the Company L reinforcements. Just then, Staff Sergeant Ralph O. Minnich appeared with information that the position on the hill was still being held. Ordering the reinforcements forward on the double, under command of Technical Sergeant Elmer H. Kinatader, the battalion commander took off to stop the artillery and halt Lieutenant Johnson. En route Sergeant Kinatader and his group were met by Sergeant Urban who came down the hill to report that the enemy assault had been stopped, the self-propelled guns had withdrawn and that seventeen men of Company L were still holding the position. Later in the morning, Lieutenant Johnson moved his platoon to Hill 5 to strengthen the line and assume command.

The 376th Combat Team had reverted to the control of the 94th on March 3, having been away from Division since February 19. During this period of attachment to the 10th Armored, the 376th Infantry Regiment suffered 21 officer casualties, 403 enlisted casualties, and 173 non-battle casualties. In addition, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson's men had taken 1,483 prisoners, reduced 155 defended pillboxes and captured an estimated ten and one-half square miles of fortified territory from the enemy. The 1st Battalion moved to Wiltingen and the 3d to Schoden while the remaining battalion continued the reduction of the pillbox area south of Konz-Karthaus. On the following afternoon the 3d Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel Anderson's regiment was attached to the 301st and relieved the 1st Battalion, 302d, on line east of Serrig and began the relief of the 5th Rangers. Major Stanion's men assembled in Serrig, then moved to Irsch where they returned to

Colonel Johnson's control becoming regimental reserve. On the 4th the 2d Battalion, 376th, finished clearing the pillbox area and moved to Oberemmel where it joined the Division reserve. Early on the morning of the 5th, the 3d Battalion completed its relief of the 5th Rangers who also became part of the Division reserve.

Back at Division Headquarters, plans were being laid for a general relief in the bridgehead. The 65th Infantry Division was to replace the 26th in the Saarlautern area, following which the latter unit would move north and relieve the 94th during the nights of the 6th, 7th and 8th of March. Corps' plan called for General Malony's men to move into Luxembourg to rest and refit. While the 465th AAA and the 774th TD Battalions were to accompany the 94th, the 778th Tank Battalion was to pass to the 26th Division. Movement was scheduled by motor and XX Corps provided 270 trucks for transporting the foot elements of the Division. Secrecy required the removal of patches and bumper markings. All movement was to be under cover of darkness with strict adherence to blackout regulations. Temporarily corps operators were assigned to the lower-frequency radio sets to eliminate the necessity of a change over during the relief.

In the headquarters of the higher German commands there was also a good deal of planning and preparation under way at this time. Following the repulse of the III Battalion of the 137th Mountain Regiment by the 3d Battalion, 301st, General Hahn, commanding the German LXXXII Corps, had been assigned the 6th SS Mountain Division. With this unit and the other forces under his command he planned a second attack against the American bridgehead. The aim of the enemy corps was to cut the Zerf-Pellingen road which was being used as a supply route to Trier and to link forces with any German units which might still be holding out south of Trier.

The 6th SS Mountain Division under the command of *Gruppenführer* (Major General) Brenner was composed of two SS mountain regiments, a mountain artillery regiment, one tank destroyer battalion, and the normal complement of engineers, reconnaissance and service troops. The division possessed a total strength of about three thousand men, all in the 23- to 25-year age group. These troops had had three years of combat experience, were in good physical condition and possessed high morale. Repeatedly they had fought with the fanaticism peculiar to SS troops.

General Hahn's plan called for a coordinated attack to the west by

the 6th SS Mountain Division, the 2d Mountain Division and the remnants of the 256th Volksgrenadiers. The 6th SS Mountain Division was to seize the high ground along which the Zerf-Pellingen road ran, reconnoitering to the north and west for isolated German forces. To the north the 256th Infantry Division was to take the heights southwest of Gutweiler and be prepared to push the attack to the high ground north of Geizenburg and west of Ollmuth, while the 2d Mountain Division was to capture Muhlenberg on the south flank.

The 6th SS Mountain Division had been thoroughly trained in the tactics of attack by infiltration, which is based upon the idea of approaching as close as possible to an objective under the cover of darkness, capturing isolated posts, moving forward supporting weapons and launching the final assault with the coming of daylight. This type of attack had been developed as a result of countless bitter experiences in which strong German assault groups melted away under the tremendous fire superiority of massed American artillery. By such tactics, the SS troops hoped to take Lampaden Ridge. However, the men of the 94th had been initiated in this type of warfare two months earlier by the 11th Panzer Division, along the Siegfried Switch Line.

At 2300 hours on March 5, the men of the 6th SS Mountain Division began movement from their assembly areas. In the inky darkness they crossed the Ruwer River about midnight. Three quarters of an hour later, the II Battalion of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment closed in on the 3d Platoon of Company G, 302d, at Kummelerhof with its right assault company while the left, or southern flank of the battalion, worked its way up Hill 468 through Hardten Woods. A four-man outpost under Sergeant Richard R. Wiles, at the edge of the woods on the forward slope of the hill, had received orders to pull back, but before the men could comply with these instructions, they were cut off by infiltrating Germans. The sergeant ordered his men to make a break for the strongpoint maintained by Company F in Hentern, but under the terrific artillery fire falling on the area the men froze. Sergeant Wiles attempted to make it alone, only to be captured with the coming of daylight. Farther south a force of forty Germans and two light machine guns, under command of a Lieutenant Brockmann, was connecting the flanks of the II Battalion of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment, on its right, and *Kampfgruppe* Dahne, which was attacking Hentern, on its left.

At 0125 hours the leading elements of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment advanced up the draw south of Lampaden and were challenged by the outposts of Company I of the 302d at Lampadener Muhle. Ser-



geant Samuel Mallich, manning a light machine gun in position beside the house in the draw, fired a box of ammunition at what he thought was merely a German patrol. Noticing some of the enemy were working around to his left, the sergeant moved his gun north across the road and assumed a new firing position. It soon became apparent that the opposing force was of considerable size and the outpost withdrew to Lampaden. Moving back two men were lost to the enemy and Private First Class James M. Bender was forced to move into Schomerich to escape the advancing SS troopers. Later in the morning he was able to rejoin his company.

Following the withdrawal of the outpost, the Germans set fire to the mill located in the vicinity, and the I Battalion, 11th SS Mountain Regiment, continued up the draw between Lampaden and Schomerich. In Lampaden sounds of the German advance could be heard, but the density of the woods concealed the presence of the enemy even after flares had been fired.

By 0130 hours communication between Captain James W. Griffin of Company G, 302d, in Schomerich and his 3d Platoon in Kummelerhof had been severed. Sergeant Vincent Sacco's last message informed the company commander that small-arms and bazooka fire was being received from all directions. Thereupon Captain Griffin requested reinforcements from Major Maixner, who ordered the 2d Platoon of Company F to move from its reserve positions on Hill 467 to Schomerich. At 0200 hours men were observed on the ridge four hundred yards east of the village. A patrol sent forward to investigate was fired upon and one man was wounded. By this time bullets were ricocheting off the stone houses in Schomerich and the 2d Platoon of Company G on Hill 468 was pumping lead into Hardter Wald, which was also under fire from the 356th Field Artillery.

Shortly before 0200 hours Sergeant Max L. Ledesma of the 2d Platoon of Company K, 302d, in Obersehr, crawled out of his foxhole and headed for the cemetery north of Lampaden where regular contact with Company I was made. In the vicinity of the contact point, the sergeant, who was alone, encountered several soldiers one of whom challenged him in the proper manner. Before he could reply, he recognized them as Germans and opened fire. This fire was returned and the sergeant severely wounded. He turned into the darkness, to stagger and crawl back to Obersehr to give the alarm.

Soon afterward a German soldier, speaking perfect English, approached a security outpost of the 1st Platoon of Company B, 774th

TD Battalion, in Obersehr. When challenged the German gave the proper password from the darkness, then informed the sentinel that he would return shortly with several other men. Soon a small group of the enemy arrived, surrounded the sentry taking him prisoner. With this accomplished, elements of the III Battalion of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment moved against the village.

Technical Sergeant William B. Grose, commanding the 2d Platoon of Company K, heard part of the enemy force attempting to infiltrate into the village and ordered his men to open fire. After some sharp fighting, the platoon drove back the attackers who proceeded to dig in around Obersehr. Until daylight, the Americans engaged by fire every sound of movement outside the town. Sergeant Flaud E. Long heard groaning in the darkness in front of his position and recognized a few words in Spanish. Certain of the identity of the wounded man, the sergeant dashed from his house, ignoring the volume of fire cutting through the area. In the darkness he located Sergeant Ledesma and dragged him to shelter. Before dying of his wounds, Ledesma muttered unintelligibly about the compromised password. The fire fight continued.

By this time, Major Maixner had alerted Company F in Hentern and Company E in Baldringen. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt had done likewise in the 3d Battalion area. Captain Edwards reinforced the Company I outpost which had been driven from Lampadener Muhle and sent them forward again, but the glare of the mill blazing in the draw prevented their moving beyond the edge of Lampaden. Enemy movement had been picked up in the draw to the north and heavy artillery and mortar concentrations were fired on this area and on the draw to the south. Company G continued to call for fire on Hardter Wald. The 2d Platoon of Company F, under Sergeant Howard J. Morton, reached Schomerich and went into position in the northeast edge of the village.

By 0400 hours the full might of the attack of the 6th SS Mountain Division was unleashed. A force of undetermined size assaulted the 1st Platoon of Company K, 302d, in Ollmuth but the thrust was repelled by Lieutenant Riggs Mahoney's men. The III Battalion of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment advanced against and into Obersehr, laying siege to elements of the 774th TD Battalion, the 3d Platoon of the 302d's Cannon Company and elements of Company K in the town. At the same time, the II Battalion of the 11th hit the forward positions of Company I in front of Lampaden, overrunning some and infiltrating

past others. Meanwhile, elements of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment were attacking Schomerich and climbing the wooded, southeastern slope of Hill 468 under heavy American artillery fire. *Kampfgruppe* Dahne was starting a pincers movement against the 3d Platoon of Company F in Hentern while Lieutenant Brockmann's force which had been securing the left flank of the II Battalion, 12th SS Mountain Regiment, began its secondary mission of disrupting communications and harassing artillery positions. Farther south the II Battalion, 137th Mountain Regiment, prepared to move against Muhlenberg.

In Obersehr men of Company K defended the front and flanks of the position while the TDs covered the street between the two rows of houses. When Sergeant Grose requested flares from his company commander, Captain Joseph Bugel, in Neidersehr, the CO replied that he had only three but promised to give warning before he fired these. Prior to each firing, Sergeant Grose was notified by radio in sufficient time to permit him to alert his men. As each flare illuminated the area, all weapons went into action. In this manner the battle wore on, between the Germans in and around the town and the Americans holed up in a few of the houses.

In Lampaden Company I was hard pressed. The 3d Platoon, on the forward slope of the ridge to the north, was first struck on the left flank near the head of the draw. A group of Germans approached the foxhole of Private Charles F. McCartney, on the extreme left of the platoon, and were challenged. Receiving no reply, Private McCartney opened fire and was killed by a return burst from an enemy machine gun. Fire from the rest of the squad temporarily drove back the enemy and Staff Sergeant Sidney Schrager arrived with half a platoon to reinforce the position. As this group crawled toward the flank under attack, Sergeant Schrager was wounded and evacuated with difficulty under the grazing fire raking the area. While this was happening, Staff Sergeant Dominick J. Bondi, platoon guide of the 2d Platoon, led forward a squad and a half to strengthen the center of the line. This group reached the crest of the ridge under heavy machine-gun fire from Hill 464.

In Schomerich elements of Companies F and G were firing into the darkness at the sounds of the enemy attack. On Hill 468, the mountaineers moved right up to the barbed wire in front of the 2d Platoon of Company G. Sergeant Domer V. Miller and Sergeant John C. Finger, manning one of the HMGs, opened fire at point-blank range. They expended three boxes of ammunition, but were overrun, after killing the first German who leaped into their emplacement, while they

were attempting to reload. Meanwhile, the enemy continued to press forward in the darkness against the sustained fire of the defenders. Sergeant Patrick J. Hassett, in charge of the remaining heavy machine gun, personally killed three Germans at the very edge of his emplacement. Technical Sergeant Arthur C. Ernst, commanding the 2d Platoon, reported his situation to Captain Griffin and was ordered to make a break for town. The Americans came down the hill on the double mixed with the attackers. Sergeant Milton H. Stern and Private First Class Morgan H. Morgan dashed to the house being held by one of the antitank squads yelling, "We're GIs! Let us in!" Remains of the 2d Platoon then assumed positions in the southern portion of Schomerich.

In Hentern the 3d Platoon of Company F and company headquarters met the attack of *Kampfgruppe* Dahne with a furious volley of small-arms fire which slowed the assault but could not prevent a small group of Germans from reaching the roadblock at the northern edge of the village, near the company command post. When the SS troopers attempted to remove the antitank mines laid across the road here, Captain Kops hurled a grenade into their midst. The resulting explosion detonated some of the mines, which killed five of the enemy, blew in the side of a house and buried the man who had handed Captain Kops the grenade. During this action, the reserve portion of the *Kampfgruppe* circled to the rear of the town. Finding himself surrounded, the CO of Company F ordered the 1st Platoon on Hill 467 to his assistance.

Under Lieutenant Brockmann, the German force which had been wandering around in the area west of Hentern and Baldringen decided to attack the latter town astride the road from the west. The southern portion of this unit captured Sergeant Richard W. Finkbone, but intense fire from the village destroyed the ardor of the attackers; they sent their prisoner into town as a surrender envoy. Sergeant Finkbone, who had been wounded in the arm, dashed into Baldringen forgetful of the German blanket he had draped about himself. Fortunately he was recognized before his comrades opened fire. The desired surrender was arranged. While the PWs were being marched to the American lines, a German artillery concentration caused a minor panic. Some of the prisoners started to run but Private First Class Michael A. Scioli restored order with a few well placed bursts from a submachine gun. A short time later the remainder of this force was also taken prisoner. Before the second group of PWs could be moved to cover,

an enemy artillery concentration eliminated all but their leader, Lieutenant Brockmann.

The next stage of the German attack unrolled to the north, in the sector of the 3d Cavalry Group. At 0630 hours approximately fifty Germans took Hill 405 which was unoccupied and, after leaving a security detachment, proceeded northward against Gutweiler. They swarmed into town and occupied a few houses; however, the furious fire of the cavalrymen caused so many casualties the enemy agreed to surrender. In conjunction with this attack, another force of approximately one German company, moved westward against Hill 427, also undefended. This group then swept to the northeast in an attempt to capture Korlingen from the rear. It met with no success.

At 0700 hours, the II Battalion of the 137th Mountain Regiment, 2d Mountain Division, attacked the positions of Company I, 301st Infantry, on Muhlenberg, in the bend of the Ruwer River northeast of Zerf. Moving steadily up the wooded slope, the enemy assaulted some and passed between other widely scattered positions of the 2d and 3d Platoons. Bitter fighting developed during which Lieutenant James T. Flower of the 2d Platoon, by shifting his men about for repeated thrusts at the enemy, managed to hold the right knoll of the hill.

All along the front under attack, the situation was uncertain and the outlook for the Division far from encouraging. Ollmuth was quiet except for occasional artillery fire from across the Ruwer. In Niedersehr Captain Bugel had posted snipers, drawn from his company headquarters, east and south of the village to harass the Germans around the town. In Obersehr Lieutenant Joseph K. Harden, commanding one of the 302d's cannon platoons, was requesting tank and infantry reinforcement. Around Lampaden, the men of Company I, in disorganized groups, were trading shots with the enemy round for round. Company G in Schomerich was surrounded and the 3d Platoon of the company in Kummelerhof was an unknown factor. The 1st Platoon of Company F was dispatched to Hentern to assist the 3d Platoon in its battle with *Kampfgruppe* Dahne. On Hill 473, and still unmolested, was the bulk of Company E. Other elements of the company in Baldringen had fourteen prisoners and were reporting heavy artillery fire on the town. Company I of the 301st was embroiled in the woods on Muhlenberg. The situation left much to be desired.

With the coming of daylight, Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt, in Lampaden, ordered the CO of Company L to send a platoon, supported by

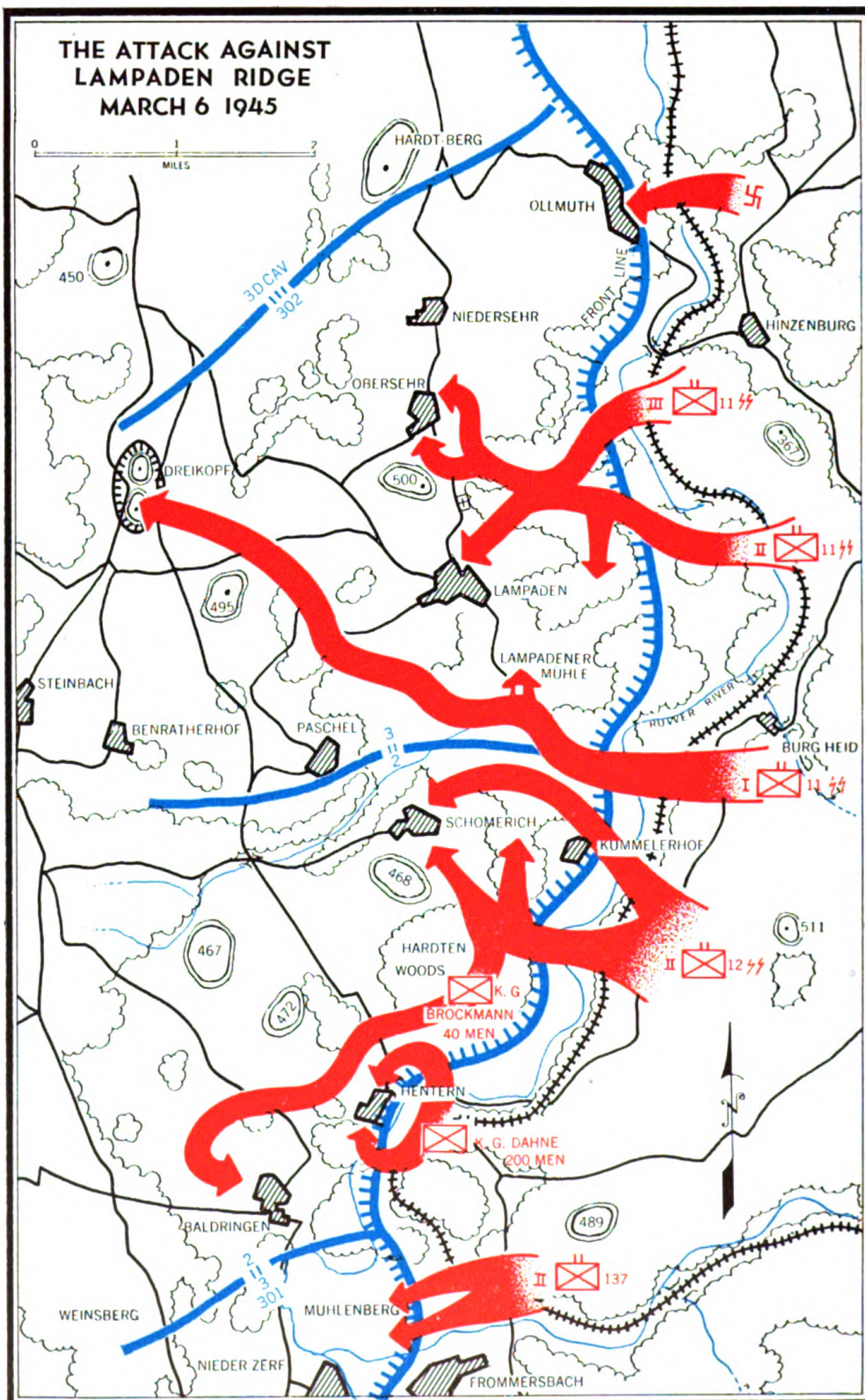
three tanks, to relieve Obersehr. This assignment was given to Lieutenant Ramirez's 3d Platoon. The original plan of attack called for one tank, supported by a squad of infantry, to take the road leading west from Lampaden around Hill 500, while the remainder of the force used the north-south road between the two towns. As the advance began, the riflemen encountered intense fire from Hill 500 and it was discovered that all three tanks had taken the road to the west. One of the mediums was hit and this occasioned their withdrawal. Returning to Lampaden, Lieutenant Ramirez set his attack in motion a second time. With the 3d Squad on the left, the 1st on the right and the 2d in support, the platoon moved forward with the tanks against terrific and accurate enemy fire. The Germans employed machine guns, *Schmeissers* and *Panzerfausts*. Moreover, they were supported by high-velocity antitank fire from across the Ruwer. During the advance the fog which blanketed the valley of the Ruwer alternately lifted and fell; visibility varied from fairly good to poor. In the left squad, three men including the squad leader were hit soon after they moved forward. About the same time the platoon leader became a casualty and command passed to Technical Sergeant Albert I. Orr. Part way up Hill 500 the right tank stopped and withdrew a little. The other followed suit. Technician Fifth Grade Harry E. Hebard, the platoon aid man, who remained with a wounded man in front of the armor was killed at this time. Sergeant Orr then committed the support between the two assault squads and after a hasty reorganization, fearlessly pressed the attack against the stubborn defense of the SS troopers. Following the tanks, the infantry moved toward the crest of the hill. In the 3d Squad there remained only six effectives out of the eleven men who had started the attack; Staff Sergeant Daniel Pash and Sergeant John A. Regan were both killed on Hill 500. One of the tanks knocked out a German machine-gun nest emplaced behind a pile of cattle beets and with this the depleted platoon and the armor swept to the crest. There the infantrymen killed or captured some fifty Germans.

Then trouble began again. Private First Class Russel E. Wellman, a member of the platoon, continues the story:

An 88 on the next hill commenced firing on the tanks. The men hugged the ground and prayed while the tank commander radioed for permission to withdraw to defilade. We had been glad to have the tanks, but now we were glad to see them go as they were drawing fire on us. From that time until the next night we just stayed there . . . wet, cold, no food and little water. Jerry threw concentrations of everything he had from mortars to rockets



# THE ATTACK AGAINST LAMPADEN RIDGE MARCH 6 1945



and 88s. We listened to the artillery around us and tried to figure out where the line ran. The next day they told us there were Germans all around us. Some of us found hard crackers and sardines on dead Germans. Hungry as we were they tasted good! On the second night a few men went into town for hot chow and the rest of us got K rations. The third day the platoon was relieved.

Inside Obersehr, the American defenders continued to lash out savagely, at the cordon of Germans surrounding them, with the fire of their own weapons and the guns of the 356th Field Artillery supporting their defense. After daylight a German carrying a white flag appeared at the northern edge of the village. He counseled surrender, reminding the besieged forces that they were surrounded, that their heavy machine guns had been captured and that even within the town their forces were divided into isolated groups. Staff Sergeant William J. Murphy of the 774th TD Battalion spoke for the group in replying to the surrender emissary: "See those tracks you made coming up here? Well, you fill them a hell of a lot faster going back!" This blunt refusal to yield brought a prompt renewal of hostilities. A short time later, an enemy thrust was made against Ollmuth to the northeast. Neither effort gained any ground for the Germans.

At 0800 hours Company C of the 302d left Irsch followed by the 1st Platoon of Company A, 778th Tank Battalion with orders to report to Major Maixner and relieve Company G in Schomerich. The 1st Platoon of Company F had left its positions on Hill 467, driven into Hentern and mopped up the Germans working on Captain Kops and his 3d Platoon. This action netted some twenty-four prisoners beside destroying the remains of *Kampfgruppe* Dahne. Company F established radio contact with the 3d Platoon of Company G and learned it was still in action at Kummelerhof. Company E reported its situation was under control on Hill 472 and in Baldringen.

Farther to the south in the area of Company I of the 301st on Muhlenberg, Private First Class Bennett P. Katzen organized a small group and led it forward to help restore the line. The company's machine guns and mortar support were active and about 0930 hours, the enemy pulled back prior to dropping a heavy artillery barrage on the hill. A half hour later the Germans launched another attack, but this too was beaten off. In the meantime Captain Donovan, commanding Company I of the 301st, obtained a platoon of Company L from Major O'Neil. This force, under Sergeant Kinatader, advanced up the left side of Muhlenberg to reestablish that portion of the hill.

Aside from sporadic artillery fire Company I's positions received no further attention.

All during the morning there was furious fighting in and around the town of Schomerich. As the visibility improved, so did the marksmanship of the men of the 1st Platoon of Company G and the 2d Platoon of Company F. Supported by the machine guns and mortars of Company H, by the antitankers and tank destroyermen, they wrought havoc upon those elements of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment committed against them. After the fog lifted the enemy made a second assault on the town only to run into furious and well directed fire. Captain Griffin, half-blind from a head wound received at Sinz, suffered a second head injury but refused to relinquish command. He continued to rally and direct his men. Private First Class Carl T. Swift, commanding a squad of new men in the 2d Platoon, ably directed their fire, which broke the enemy assault against the northeast corner of the village. Staff Sergeant Milton H. Stern and Private First Class Harvey J. Reynolds dropped hand grenades from a second story window on several Germans who had approached close enough to set fire to one of the TD's half-tracks. All morning long enemy artillery, rockets and mortars rained on the village. German bazookas and *Panzerfausts* fired into Schomerich, set several buildings afire, and there were some enemy snipers within the town.

Relentlessly, the German attack continued. After the initial failures, the enemy redoubled his efforts and succeeded in gaining entry into the eastern and southeastern parts of the town. One squad of the 1st Platoon of Company G, a heavy machine gun section and a mortar section of Company H were surrounded and captured. Donning American helmets and field jackets, the Germans took up street fighting in earnest, even pressing civilians into service as snipers. The defenders met these assaults, stopped them and prepared to retake lost houses and free captured comrades. Sergeant Orlean A. Jacobson and Private First Class Francis A. Palet took a bazooka into the street, flanked an enemy-held building and eliminated its defenders with a round through the wall. Sergeant Ernst was wounded while attempting to storm the house in which the mortar men were held prisoner. Private First Class Clifford R. McCumber ran from house to house, distributing ammunition procured from Lieutenant Robert E. Gobin's machine-gun platoon.

In Lampaden Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt discovered he was cut off and encircled when the crew of the TD position west of town dashed back to report they had been overrun, and when Lieutenant Najjar of

the A&P Platoon and his driver, on reconnaissance west of town, brought back ten prisoners, including an *Oberleutnant*, taken at the pumping station. A task force formed by Lieutenant Robert O. Kimball of cooks, drivers, mechanics and TD-men set out to clear the area in rear of town. From the road junction west of Lampaden, they encountered strong fire and went into a defensive position south of the road, under the command of First Sergeant Bruno Felicelli. Sergeant Eugene T. Hack of the 3d Battalion Intelligence Section and Sergeant Robert A. Hawd of the I&R Platoon identified Lieutenant Najjar's prisoners as members of the II Battalion, 11th SS Mountain Regiment and learned that their mission was to cut the American supply route to Trier by blocking the Zerf-Pellingen road.

Company L made another attempt to clear the road into Obersehr when Lieutenant Travers sent Sergeant George H. Stockman's squad of the 2d Platoon up Hill 500 with the tank that had not reached the crest. This group moved up and over the hill; here the tank was driven back by *Panzerfausts* and long-range antitank fire from the northeast. Despite this fact Sergeant Stockman and his men continued forward until they made contact with the 3d Platoon of Company I. Fire from the machine gun in the cemetery killed Sergeant Stockman and pinned down his riflemen. On the crest of Hill 500, the 3d Platoon of Company L made two attempts to reach Sergeant Stockman's men and the position of the 3d Platoon of Company I without success. Sergeant Philip D. Grant's squad, supported by a tank, was sent against the enemy position in the cemetery, but furious automatic-weapons fire, *Panzerfausts* and artillery beat back both tank and infantry.

During the morning, three men of the 7th Field Artillery Observation Battalion came into Lampaden. They reported that after spending the night in Pellingen, they were on their way to Obersehr via Lampaden when west of the latter town their  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck was hit by a *Panzerfaust*. The lieutenant with them was seriously wounded and three men captured. By running and crawling through the hail of automatic-weapons fire directed against them, the rest of the group managed to escape. This information confirmed the fact that the enemy was well in rear of the town.

In Obersehr, Private First Class Paul L. Zaring of the 3d Platoon, of the 302d's Cannon Company, spent the morning engaged in a private feud with the SS troopers. He had been on guard at his gun position southwest of the village when the Germans, infiltrating in

the darkness, seriously wounded the other guard and penned the rest of the platoon in a group of houses. Private First Class Zaring elected to remain with the guns and his wounded companion to whom he administered first aid. During the ensuing hours, he dodged artillery, small-arms fire and an occasional *Panzerfaust* while picking off those SS troopers who came within range. At one time, a German officer, grenade in hand, got to within ten yards of the howitzers before he was stopped. The action of this lone soldier saved the platoon's guns from capture or destruction and resulted in the death of eight SS troopers.

When the situation seemed a bit improved, the 3d Battalion, 302d, sent an ambulance and a 2½-ton truck loaded with twenty-five wounded Americans including Lieutenant Ramirez, fourteen wounded Germans and a six-man ammunition detail westward toward Irsch. Near Dreikopf these vehicles were stopped by the enemy. Technician Fifth Grade Albert H. Case and Private First Class Wilford Macon had all but persuaded the Nazi commander to let them pass when one of the German wounded complained of the treatment he had received. This settled the matter. The group was taken prisoner and herded into a vacant gun emplacement.

A 356th Field Artillery wire party which set out by jeep from Steinbach to repair a break in the line running back to the artillery CP in Oberemmel was hit by two *Panzerfausts* just west of Dreikopf. Sergeant Robert A. Klahn was killed, Technician Fifth Grade John R. Deller wounded and Sergeant Woodrow J. Boyette captured. The two men surviving the encounter were led to the gun emplacement where they joined the other American prisoners.

Throughout the morning reports of the German infiltration drifted back to the various S-2s in the area. At 0700 hours a group of enemy was seen in the woods at the road junction west of Baldringen. At 0930 hours an enemy patrol was sighted one mile south of Pellingen. Half an hour later a four-man German patrol was fired on near Steinbach and withdrew to the north. At about 1100 hours tank destroyers in the vicinity of Steinbach reported twenty Germans digging in on Hill 507 and brought them under fire. Some thirty minutes later an American half-track coming south from Pellingen was fired upon by about fifty Germans as it passed Dreikopf. Occupants of the vehicle returned the fire without slackening speed and passed through safely.

In Irsch Colonel Johnson's headquarters estimated the enemy force at the roadblock at about one platoon and Company B was alerted for

action. Lieutenant John C. Hanes, one of the regimental liaison officers, guided forward a platoon of light tanks from Company D of the 778th Tank Battalion which were to assist Captain Wancio's company in clearing the Zerf-Pellingen road and reestablishing contact with the 3d Battalion in Lampaden.

Meanwhile Company C of the 302d, followed by five medium tanks, had moved east from Irsch on the highway, cut northeast over a mountain trail to Kummerwald and reached the Zerf-Pellingen road, west of Baldringen. Here Lieutenant Mark Hammer, commanding the company, left Technical Sergeant James A. Davis and the 2d Platoon to take positions in the woods at the road junction. The platoon's mission was to keep both roads open and to capture any Germans discovered in the immediate area. Meanwhile, the rest of the company and the tanks moved north to the CP of the 2d Battalion located in a pillbox five hundred yards south of Steinbach.

There the battalion commander informed Lieutenant Hammer that the 3d Platoon of Company G was cut off in Kummelerhof, the 2d Platoon had been driven off Hill 468 and that the remnants of Company G were bottled up in Schomerich. Company C was to retake the hill and hold it, at which time Company G would break out of Schomerich and assist in consolidating the battalion front.

Company C proceeded east through the woods to an assembly area in a small grove east of the objective. The company commander placed his 3d Platoon, commanded by Technical Sergeant Marvin L. Kress, in position to protect the left of the attack against any German thrust that might develop from the direction of Schomerich, and instructed the light-machine-gun section and one section of heavies to remain in the assembly area until needed. Technical Sergeant Leonard T. Paluszynski's 1st Platoon, the section of HMGs commanded by Staff Sergeant Frank Schwemer and four medium tanks were to assault Hill 468. Without benefit of artillery preparation, Lieutenant Hammer led the attacking force up the hill. Against light opposition, the objective was seized. About ten Germans were killed in the operation and an equal number abandoned the position to escape. The 3d Platoon was then brought forward and placed on the left, just west of the road running down the hill into Schomerich. Also, the machine-gun sections came forward to strengthen the company's flanks.

With the position organized, radio contact was made with Captain Griffin in Schomerich who reported his strength was too low to enable him to move from the town. His heavy machine guns and mortars



had been captured and he was holding only four of the houses. Captain Griffin requested tank support.

As the medium tanks rolled toward Schomerich, the enemy troops, who had expended most of their *Panzerfausts* against the houses defended by elements of Companies F and G within the town, began a hasty withdrawal. In short order the armor and infantry cleared the town, retaking most of the Company H men who had been made prisoner. The tanks then returned to Hill 468 and the CO of Company C prepared to join Captain Griffin.

In the 3d Battalion sector, the relief of Obersehr still plagued Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt. Consequently, Sergeant Grant's squad was pulled back and with the 1st Squad of the 2d Platoon was placed under command of Lieutenant Cerboskas. Both squads then moved up Hill 500, and each mounted one of the medium tanks in the area of the 3d Platoon. The armor roared straight over the hill and into Obersehr, overrunning the enemy south of town. Dismounting in the village, assault parties formed and with the assistance of the besieged Americans within Obersehr, soon cleared the town.

Using the tanks in the same manner as Lieutenant Cerboskas had, Sergeant Grose and Sergeant Long stormed through the German positions north and east of Obersehr, in that order. Seventy prisoners were taken and over one hundred dead were counted on the north side of the village alone. A police detail picked up twenty-six machine guns and forty-two *Panzerfausts*.

About this time a German NCO and a sergeant from the 7th Field Artillery Observation Battalion appeared in town from the enemy roadblock at Dreikopf to effect a prisoner exchange. The matter was referred to Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt, who, fearing to trade able-bodied SS troopers who had seen the under-manned American positions on Lampaden Ridge, stalled the parley until dusk. When he could procrastinate no longer, the battalion commander sent word to the German sergeant that he lacked the authority to approve such a transaction.

Lieutenant Hammer arrived at Captain Griffin's CP in Schomerich just as the remnants of the II Battalion of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment launched another attack with fifty-odd men and two assault guns, all that remained of their original strength. Riflemen from Companies C, G and F; the machine gunners of Companies D and H; and the tank destroyer men manning a .50-caliber machine gun prepared a warm reception for the enemy, as German assault guns supporting the

attack shelled the town from the ridge to the east. On Hill 468 Lieutenant Norbert F. Krob moved his tanks forward and returned fire. The first round from the American armor sheared the barrel off one of the self-propelled guns and the remaining piece was damaged by the tank destroyer south of town. This last enemy vehicle withdrew in flames followed by the few SS troopers who survived the assault.

After the attack, Lieutenant Hammer received a radio message from his company CP informing him that heavy casualties were being suffered from enemy artillery that had continued to fall on the position since its capture. Eighteen men had been hit including Sergeant Paluszynski and Sergeant Schwemer. In conference with Captain Griffin, both company commanders agreed that their combined strength was barely sufficient to beat back another hostile thrust. This situation was reported to Major Maixner by the CO of Company C, who requested permission to leave a small force on Hill 468 and reinforce Schomerich with the larger part of his company. The battalion commander consented. This decision proved sound, for Company F in Hentern had received a message via SCR-300 from the platoon in Kummelerhof stating German self-propelled guns were moving up to the one house they held, firing into the windows. Practically all the Americans were wounded and their ammunition was exhausted. There was nothing further they could do.

Throughout the day Captain Edwards had been attempting to round up fragments of Company I. Part of his 1st Platoon was in the south-eastern edge of Lampaden, having been driven out of Lampadener Muhle before daylight. The rest of this unit and a section of machine guns from Company M were somewhere to the front. The 2d Platoon, which had been holding the center of the company line, had been cut up by infiltrating SS troopers and some of the men from this platoon had been able to work their way back into town. Company I's 3d Platoon was on the forward slope of the ridge to the north, under machine-gun fire from both flanks. One light machine gun had to be abandoned and the other was cut off with a section of heavy machine guns, east of Lampaden on the right flank of the 2d Platoon. Sergeant Bondi led forward a squad and a half to reinforce the 2d Platoon. En route a German automatic weapon stalled the advance until driven off by one of the tanks supporting the 3d Battalion. Then the party moved forward attempting to re-form the line. Later it became necessary to withdraw to establish a new perimeter on the edge of Lampaden. Staff Sergeant John R. Routh and a BAR team remained in posi-

tion on Hill 464 until late in the afternoon before being located and ordered into town.

Meanwhile, several attempts were made to reach the 3d Platoon on the left. Lieutenant John W. Bybee, commanding this platoon, had left the position prior to the attack to contact the company CP and was thus separated from his men. On three separate occasions he attempted to rejoin his platoon, but each time was stopped by the machine-gun fire raking the forward slope of the ridge. After daylight Technician Fifth Grade William T. Raley, who was with the platoon, volunteered to make a break for Lampaden to report on the situation. In a wild dash from the right flank, he reached the edge of the woods and worked his way into town. Twice the corporal attempted to rejoin Technical Sergeant Leland B. McKee and the rest of the platoon without success. The enemy automatic weapons were perfectly sited and their crews alert.

After relieving Obersehr, the two squads of Company L which had been under Lieutenant Cerboskas were placed on the flanks of Sergeant Orr's position atop Hill 500. Along with the remnants of the 1st and 2d Platoons of Company I, the battalion A&P Platoon protected the southern and eastern approaches to Lampaden, while Company L, assisted by Sergeant Felicelli's force, guarded the rear of town.

Late in the afternoon Company B of the 302d and its supporting tanks reached Steinbach. Here the 3d Platoon deployed and moved across the open ground east of the Zerf-Pellingen highway, followed by the tanks, while the 1st Platoon came abreast on the left to clear the strip of woods on that flank. Almost immediately intense machine-gun fire was received from Hill 507 to the north and *Schmeisser* fire was directed against the 3d Platoon from both sides of the highway. The tank on the extreme left was struck by a *Panzerfaust* and destroyed. It soon became evident that the German roadblock was too strong to be reduced by a single company. This fact was reported to regiment and Captain Wancio was instructed to assume a defensive position north of Steinbach for the night.

In preparation for any renewal of the attack by the enemy, the CO of the 3d Battalion continued to straighten his lines. By late afternoon the most worrisome problem was the German machine gun in the cemetery along the road to Obersehr. This determined enemy force had driven back three attacks and continued to cut off the 3d Platoon of Company I and harass the line held by Company L and elements

of the Battalion Headquarters Company. Against this position Sergeant Orr on Hill 500 was instructed to send an assault group to eliminate it. Consequently, Staff Sergeant Cecil F. Durette and the 1st Squad worked in from the northwest of the cemetery, while Sergeant Mertz, commanding one of the supporting tanks, rolled up from the southwest. Between these two forces, the troublesome strongpoint was reduced and the surrounding area cleared.

After their phone lines went dead, Lieutenant William J. Honan of Company M had anxiously waited for someone to report back from his machine-gun sections. Time passed and still there was no contact. The Weapons Platoon leader had decided to go forward to personally investigate the situation when he encountered Sergeant Walter L. Cranford of Company I who was concerned over the safety of some of his men. Arming himself with a light machine gun, Lieutenant Honan took Sergeant Cranford with him as he moved out of Lampaden, paralleling the road running east from town. On the southern end of Hill 464, they found Sergeant Wallace M. Gallant along with three of his men manning the right gun of their section. The left gun was in its emplacement and still in operating condition. Sergeant Gallant and his crew reported they had been firing on groups of Germans in front of this position all day. To conserve ammunition, the NCO employed his carbine against individuals while saving the HMG for more renumeration targets. This small group had even managed to capture six prisoners. Farther away, Private First Class Paul W. Chapman and his crew were found, still in action, at their light-machine-gun position. Lieutenant Honan ordered all three guns and the crews back into Lampaden. Then, with sheer contempt for the enemy, he stood in a completely exposed position, firing his machine gun from the hip to cover their withdrawal. Following this, the lieutenant and Sergeant Cranford started a search for the other HMG section of the platoon. Several times the two men were engaged by groups of SS troopers, but on each occasion Lieutenant Honan fought it out with the enemy, firing his machine gun like a BAR.

When a thorough search of the area in which the section had been emplaced revealed no trace of the machine gunners, their weapons or supporting riflemen, the two-man search party withdrew to Lampaden. Unknown to Lieutenant Honan, the missing section was working its way back to town over a circuitous route carrying the guns with them.

Under the cover of darkness Staff Sergeant Brice P. Potthoff and his rifle squad of company I worked their way back to Lampaden. They had remained in position all day, firing on the Germans that appeared

to their front and flanks. Having had no word from the rest of the company and no idea of the situation, the squad leader withdrew from his isolated position before his men were accurately located and overwhelmed.

Lieutenant Bybee and Corporal Raley made a last attempt to reach the 3d Platoon of Company I after nightfall. In the darkness they managed to cross the ridge, but were met with German automatic-weapons fire coming from the foxholes that had been manned by their platoon. Obviously, the group had been either killed or captured sometime during the day by the German mountain troops. When this was reported to the battalion commander, Lieutenant Bybee was instructed to form a composite platoon from the cooks and headquarters personnel of Companies I and M and commit them in the gap between the A&P Platoon on the ridge and elements of Company I in the western edge of Lampaden. At the same time Lieutenant Travers of Company L formed his mess and supply personnel into a rifle squad, posting them on the southern edge of the village. With a perimeter thus completed, the 3d Battalion settled down to await the next German attack.

During the night, Private First Class Daniel W. Aman and Private Harry R. Ellis of Sergeant Stockman's squad of the 1st Platoon, Company L, crawled over the ridge to safety. Both men were wounded and believed the other nine men of the squad were dead. This group had been cut down by enemy machine-gun fire. Following this, SS troopers came forward and shot up the Americans whose bodies were kicked, spat upon and stripped of personal articles. Sergeant John Gedaminski, who was still living was riddled with fire from a machine pistol. Aman and Ellis survived by feigned death until the coming of nightfall.

HEADQUARTERS XX CORPS  
Office of the Commanding General  
APO 340 U. S. Army

5 March 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding General, 94th Infantry Division, APO  
94, U. S. Army.

1. Your division has most expeditiously accomplished its mission of clearing the Saar-Moselle triangle and seizing a bridgehead east of the Saar River. In so doing, it made a vital contribution to the capture of the fortified town of Trier.

2. The aggressive and efficient manner in which these missions have been carried out reflects great credit upon the division in keeping with the high traditions of the service and upon you as its Commanding General.

3. Your ability to rapidly take advantage of opportunities without becoming involved in unwarranted delay has contributed substantially to the successful accomplishment of your mission.

4. You and the personnel of your command are hereby highly commended for your splendid performance of duty during this operation.

*WALTON H. WALKER*  
Major General,  
United States Army  
Commanding

1st Ind.

AG 201.22 (5Mar45) CG

HQ 94 INF DIV APO 94 US ARMY 28 Mar 45.

TO: All soldiers of the 94th Division and Attached Units.

1. This commendation from our Corps Commander has been earned by the splendid efforts of each one of you individually and of these efforts I am fully aware.

2. I take great pleasure in transmitting this letter to each member of this command. It may be mailed to the United States provided no changes are made in it.

*HARRY J. MALONY*  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commanding



## *Chapter 37: RESTORING THE BRIDGEHEAD*

**B**Y 1700 HOURS on the 6th of March, the front of the 94th Division was in fairly good order. The 3d Battalion, 301st, still held its positions on Muhlenberg. The 2d Battalion, 302d, had restored all of its sector with the exception of the outpost at Kummelerhof. Farther north, the 3d Battalion, 302d, reported its position tenable although no attempt had been made to restore the original line in front of Lampaden. On the extreme left flank of the Division, the 3d Cavalry Group was maintaining its front. Only substantial gain to the enemy resulting from the fanatical attack of the mountaineers was the roadblock on the Zerf-Pellingen road at Dreikopf, which was now known to be held by a strong German force.

General Malony was particularly anxious to wipe out the SS troopers manning the roadblock behind his lines, so that the scheduled relief by the 26th Division might be completed and the tired troops of the 94th might move to the Luxembourg rest area. To eliminate this SS group astride the Zerf-Pellingen road, the CO of the 376th Infantry, which was in reserve near Oberemmel, was instructed to commit a battalion against the Dreikopf position. The 1st Battalion was selected for this mission and instructed to attack south from Pellingen, in conjunction with a northward thrust by Company B of the 302d from its defensive positions above Steinbach.

Lieutenant Colonel Miner jeeped to Pellingen for a reconnaissance while his troops started marching toward the town where a platoon of medium tanks were to meet them. About dark the leading elements of the battalion arrived at the road junction south of Pellingen. Company A, commanded by Lieutenant Joseph T. Koshoffer, started south astride the Zerf-Pellingen highway to gain contact with the enemy. Company C, under Lieutenant William P. Springer, followed. When the leading unit halted north of Dreikopf to allow its flank patrols to return, Lieutenant Springer deployed his company to protect the left of the battalion. At the same time, patrols were sent out from Company C to gain contact with the 3d Battalion, 302d, in Obersehr and Lampaden. Meanwhile, Company B led by Lieutenant William G. Land, passed through Company A. It pushed south, on the west of the highway, as far as the small ridge opposite Dreikopf. Company A then came abreast of Lieutenant Land's men, taking positions east of the Zerf-Pellingen road.

Lieutenant Carl A. Crouse led the 1st Platoon of Company B down the wooded draw that extended in the direction of the Zerf-Pellingen road. In the darkness the area was searched without encountering any Germans. At the head of the draw, the platoon took a crescent-shaped

position in the edge of the woods, facing south toward Hill 507 and southeast toward the highway. A second patrol, from Technical Sergeant John F. Nagy's 3d Platoon, started south down the highway in an attempt to contact Company B of the 302d. Running into heavy fire, this group was unable to accomplish its mission. The patrols from Company C attempting to gain contact with Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men met with no better success. A reconnaissance group under Sergeant Herbert L. Monroe, moving toward Lampaden at about 2200 hours, stopped when a voice was heard in the darkness. It proved to be a German soldier complaining about the bad weather and the amount of water in his foxhole. Another group under Sergeant Harold P. Price using the same general route about 0200 hours was stopped by the volume of enemy small-arms fire employed against it.

Even after the return of the patrols, the situation remained sketchy. The battalion commander decided to attack as soon as possible on the morning of the 7th and gave word that he was to be notified immediately when the supporting armor arrived.

During the night the 356th Field Artillery, from positions forward of Oberemmel, continued harassing missions on the draws in front of the positions of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 302d, in spite of the presence of Germans on the ridge 1,500 yards to their front. By morning, the battalion was also engaging the enemy roadblock itself, through the liaison officer of the 919th Field Artillery Battalion with Lieutenant Colonel Miner's Battalion.

Along the southern portion of the division front, the relief by the 26th Division began according to schedule on the night of the 6th. The 328th Infantry Regiment took over the sector of Colonel Hagerty's men while the 101st and 104th Regiments waited their turn to move into the bridgehead. With the 3d Battalion, 376th replacing its own 3d Battalion, the 301st Infantry moved from the lines and across the Moselle along with the 301st Field Artillery, the Rangers, the 319th Engineers less Company B, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop, Battery B of the 465th AAA Battalion and miscellaneous service units. The night was extremely black. Slowly the columns crawled over the hills and through the blasted towns under the guidance of the military police. Throughout the night, the Division signalmen laid wire from Saarburg to Mondorf in Luxembourg, that communications would be in place when Division Headquarters was ready to move.

On the night of March 6-7 the 1st Battalion, 376th, was not the only one preparing an attack. Having taken stock of the situation, the commanding general of the SS troopers decided on further offensive action. The I Battalion of the 11th at Dreikopf had not yet received a major attack from the Americans, but exploitation of its success was impossible since the three other mountain battalions had been all but annihilated. Still uncommitted were the I and III Battalions of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment. Therefore, the German general decided to employ the battered remnants of the 11th Regiment for another thrust at Lampaden. Their orders called for the capture of the town and a junction with the I Battalion on Dreikopf, by an attack which would jump off at 0400 hours the following morning. Were this thrust successful, the two fresh battalions of the 12th SS Mountain Regiment would be committed to exploit the German gains.

In the cold, foggy, early hours of the 7th, the German attack got under way. The mountaineers, directly supported by self-propelled assault guns, advanced against the east and south sides of Lampaden following a blistering preparation by massed rocket, mortar and artillery fire.

Within the town, the conglomerate American forces waited for their first glimpse of the mountaineers through the fog. To their front, the 105s of the American artillery probed and stabbed the darkness. Fighting really began when the leading German assault gun cut loose on the houses in the eastern edge of the village. Technical Sergeant James T. Chapman replied with fire from the 57mm manned by the 1st Squad of the battalion Antitank Platoon. A duel followed, in which the opposing gunners engaged each other's muzzle flashes. Lieutenant Charles H. Pausner, Jr., concentrated the fire of his artillery on the open ground east of town while Captain Benjamin F. Buffington, at the battalion CP, dickered for heavier stuff from the 390th Field Artillery Battalion. As darkness lifted and the mists began to thin, the outer edge of Lampaden spit fire and flame. Sergeant Gallant from his machine-gun position on a manure pile poured burst after burst into the oncoming ranks of the attackers. Sergeant Chapman's crew slammed out every last round of 57mm ammunition at their position. Lieutenant Honan and Private First Class William T. Baxter, each manned a 60mm mortar singlehanded to plaster the attackers. Lieutenant Douglas H. Smith spotted six SS men behind a haystack and dropped a round of 81mm squarely on top of them. Riflemen, machine gunners, mortar crews, antitankers, tank destroyermen and

artillerymen contributed to the curtain of fire that denied the village to the mountaineers.

In the meantime, the 1st Battalion, 376th, had started its attack southward against the Dreikopf roadblock. Company B was designated to clear Hill 507 which was now believed to be the enemy's main position. This assault was launched by the 2d and 3d Platoons which advanced astride the Zerf-Pellingen highway, each supported by four medium tanks. Sergeant Nagy, on the right, moved the 3d Platoon forward slowly through the fog. Control and contact became increasingly difficult and then the Germans struck. Withering automatic weapons fire was thrown against the platoon. Vainly the tankers peered into the mists trying to locate the enemy gunners. Determined SS troopers slipped up in the fog to employ bazookas and *Panzerfausts* against the Shermans. Two tanks were destroyed and a third damaged. In the face of this opposition, the platoon and the remaining tank withdrew to reorganize. The 2d Platoon fared no better. Just after crossing the line of departure, both infantry and tanks were hit from the left flank. Two of the armored vehicles fell prey to the enemy tank hunters and the remainder of the force withdrew.

About 0900 hours the remains of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment in front of Lampaden made their do-or-die assault. Their self-propelled guns pounded the village, reducing several buildings to mere heaps of rubble and setting fire to the schoolhouse. Taking advantage of the added confusion caused by the fire, the assault weapons swept into town. At the road junction in the eastern section of Lampaden, Lieutenant Charles M. Phillips had placed an American tank mounting a 76mm gun. This weapon commanded the roads leading into the village from the east and the southeast. It was so sited, that should it be knocked out, it would serve as a roadblock to prevent farther advance by German assault weapons or tanks. The enemy gunners scored first and pumped three rounds into the tank, which, though it became a total loss, prevented enemy vehicles from entering Lampaden. Even without the support of their self-propelled guns, the SS troopers succeeded in taking seven or eight buildings from which they pushed toward the church in the center of town.

It was at this point that Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt instructed the Battalion S-4, Lieutenant Warren C. Hubbard, to attempt to get through to regiment to explain the seriousness of the situation. Also, the S-4 was to endeavor to secure a quick resupply on ammunition. Borrowing a half-track from the tank destroyers, Lieutenant Hubbard,



*Lampaden following the attack of the 6th SS Mountain Division*

along with Vernon D. Buskager, who had volunteered to drive the vehicle, and four men from the battalion radio section started from Lampaden. As they reached the crest of the ridge west of Hill 500, they were greeted with a flurry of machine-gun fire but raced onward. At the next road junction, the vehicle was hit by a *Panzerfaust* which luckily failed to do any serious damage, though concussion of its explosion forced the half-track to swerve off the road to the left. The vehicle then bounced across country until it reached the lines of Company B of the 302d, in the vicinity of Steinbach.

Back in Lampaden, odd groups of the 3d Battalion were busy cleaning up the town. Private First Class Baxter, going to the ammunition dump for more mortar shells, killed one German with his pistol and captured three others. Sergeant Chapman, after the supply of 57mm rounds was exhausted, armed himself with a bazooka and began sniping at the German self-propelled guns. He chalked up four destroyed vehicles and was joined by Private First Class Baxter, who accounted for a fifth with a rocket launcher he had acquired. Following this Private First Class Baxter dashed into a burning building to assist in the rescue of two wounded comrades while Sergeant Chapman

organized a small force which he led in a fierce assault against one of the houses the enemy had occupied. By use of small arms and grenades, the building was retaken and the SS troops defending it eliminated. Meanwhile, Sergeant Kelly led a clearing party that went to work on the German-held buildings across the road from the church. At the same time, Staff Sergeant George L. Brinkerhoff and Private First Class Louis A. Albert of the battalion S-3 section were mopping up east of the church. This last attack of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment cost them five assault guns destroyed and two more damaged; thirty-five men killed and forty captured. Lampaden remained in American hands.

During the morning, the size of the enemy force holding Dreikopf was accurately determined when Major A. H. Middleton of the Division artillery flew over the position in a liaison plane. A low ceiling necessitated flying at about five hundred feet which gave a good view of the area. On the second pass, a plane from the 195th Field Artillery Group joined the major and both ships received a heavy volume of fire from the ground. The observer in the 195th Cub was killed and Major Middleton's plane sustained thirty-five hits. However, both ships managed to land without crashing. Major Middleton reported that the I Battalion, 11th SS Mountain Regiment, numbered approximately four hundred men.

Supported by four medium tanks, Company B made its second assault against Hill 507 during the afternoon. The 2d and 3d Platoons moved on their objective from the northeast with the riflemen abreast of the tanks. Against this advance the mountaineers directed a fearsome volume of fire. *Panzerfausts* and the turret gun of one of the knocked-out American tanks were brought to bear against the armor, while the foot troops were the targets of numerous machine guns and *Schmeissers*. All four of the supporting tanks were knocked out; the few infantrymen who reached the objective were unable to hold it. Before the support platoon could be committed, the impetus of the attack was broken; the survivors were withdrawn to their original lines. The battalion assumed positions for the night and considered a new plan.

During the afternoon the 2d Battalion, 376th, was brought forward and Company F attached to Lieutenant Colonel Miner's command. Company G, followed by Company E, moved across country toward Obersehr which the leading elements reached without opposition at



1640 hours. By 1800 hours the entire force was into town, preparing to push on to Lampaden. The scheme of maneuver called for the 2d Battalion less Company F, to plug the gap in the ruptured line of the 3d Battalion, 302d, and thus stabilize the division front.

Company G, commanded by Lieutenant Harry W. McLaughlin who had joined the battalion nine days earlier at Wiltingen, moved from Obersehr via the road west of Hill 500. Scarcely had the tail of the column cleared the village before the leading elements were under accurate automatic-weapons fire from the southwest. Lieutenant McLaughlin and three men of the 1st Platoon were killed; six others wounded. Assuming command, Lieutenant Marvin M. Kuers withdrew the company to Obersehr to reorganize. By radio, a guide was requested from Lampaden and Private First Class Felix J. Grzyninski went to Obersehr to contact the CO of Company G. He led the unit over Hill 500 and through Company L into town. Uncertain of his mission Lieutenant Kuers placed himself at the disposal of the CO of the 3d Battalion, 302d. The company was instructed to assume positions on the high ground north of Lampaden and did so shortly after midnight. Company E remained in Obersehr.

Lieutenant Colonel Miner was ordered to attack again on the morning of the 8th. The new plan of operation called for Company C to approach Hill 507 from the west while Companies A and B launched an assault from the north. To the south, Company B of the 302d would block any attempt by the enemy to withdraw in that direction.

Late in the afternoon, the enemy made another attempt at a PW exchange when Lieutenant Ramirez and a German sergeant entered Lampaden under a flag of truce. Again Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt stalled and then refused, fearing to reinforce the enemy position with able-bodied SS troopers familiar with the situation existing in and around Lampaden. From the negotiators it was learned that the number of Americans wounded at Dreikopf now numbered sixty-five. Lieutenant Ramirez was given a supply of blankets, drugs and bandages and the exchange party returned after dark.

In the perimeter of the German battalion, the captured Americans had spent a rugged day. Those who were able watched with intense interest the attacks of the 1st Battalion, 376th, and were dismayed at the destruction wrought on the tanks supporting Lieutenant Colonel Miner's men. Several times the unwounded American prisoners were sent forward to bring in the casualties of both sides. During the afternoon and all through the night, American artillery rained on the posi-

tion but fortunately none of the rounds fell in the emplacement serving as a POW cage.

With the coming of night the situation began to look critical for the SS troopers. They had beaten off two heavy attacks from the north and turned back minor thrusts on the Steinbach road, Hill 507 and Obersehr road. American artillery was falling on the position with unnerving regularity and at any time a strong, combined attack might develop from anyone of several different directions. Furthermore, the only route of withdrawal, down the draw to the east, could be blocked off at any time. With the Americans holding Lampaden and Schomerich resupply was impossible. The battalion had been without food since the 5th, casualties had continued to mount, medical supplies were exhausted and ammunition was dangerously low. Moreover, five of the six mortars with the battalion had been knocked out.

Then, to the German commander, came orders to abandon the position. All of the captured American vehicles, with the exception of the ambulance, were immobilized and the prisoners who were able to walk were prepared for departure. Sergeant Boyette and several others feigned sickness and were left with the litter cases. Technician Fifth Grade Case and Private First Class Macon were allowed to remain behind to care for the wounded, both American and German. At 0600 hours on the morning of the 8th, the I Battalion of the 11th SS Mountain Regiment streamed off Dreikopf, yielding the ground for which they had fought so bitterly. The wounded counted seventy-three Germans in one column which moved east, and 143 in a second that started southeast.

Among the prisoners the Germans took with them when they abandoned the Dreikopf position was Sergeant Charles J. Mooney of Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, 302d. Part of his story is quoted below.

At about 0500 hours a Jerry woke up all the non-wounded and told us to help carry the wounded. We filed out of our hole and went to the hole where their wounded were. We were told we would carry the wounded on stretchers about five kilometers to their aid station. We didn't like this and between Ferguson's glib tongue and my aches and pains we impressed the captain that we all had trench foot. So we got out of the carrying party. You no doubt found their wounded there.

Then this captain took his whole outfit, column of twos, and marched out about 0630. He must have passed right between our lines. We passed between two towns in back of that outpost [Dreikopf]. A Jerry had a *Schmeisser* in each of our backs and demonstrated what he'd do if we yelled out. We could



*SS prisoners being collected in the courtyard of a château north of Lampaden*



see GIs in Lampaden as we passed to the right of it. They took twelve of us non-wounded and left something like forty-nine wounded Americans. From there on we just walked. Three hundred and one miles to our final stop about thirty-five kilometers below Augsburg. Rub became very sick in Augsburg but we saw that he was placed in a hospital. I can't tell you too much about our hike from Lampaden, but it was certainly one we'll never forget. We ate dandelions and snails, rotten potato peelings and pig mash. Anything to keep us going. Miller got deathly sick on dandelions but kept going every step of the way. Six of us stuck close together and we got along all right.

After we were liberated, the whole bunch [1,200 Americans and 800 British] were put on a big farm. The rations were terrible, so we decided to take off. Pruett and Stoll didn't feel like going, so Ferg and I decided to go to the biggest town nearby and "apartment hunt," and then bring in the rest of the guys when we were settled. I had always warned the guys that even after we were liberated we would have to sweat out another week or ten days of no food. Nobody seemed to give a good goddamn about us out there.

Four of us took over a twelve-room mansion complete with bath, radios, electricity, etc. It was really heaven. Three men from an artillery outfit moved in with us to guard a warehouse next door. So we ate chow with them. Their officer took quite a liking to us and got us clean clothes. Then came the payoff. We got a brand new motorcycle from a Senegalese for one pack of butts! This we used for contact with the group who were living like dogs on the farm.

Ferg and I lived in our mansion for nine days and left it on the morning of the day we flew out. Boy, we hated to give up that cycle! So that's it, now we're waiting for the boat.

Even though I'm getting home, I wouldn't go through it again for the same promise. Fergie is still the same old wit and Miller turned out to be a pretty square guy. Rub proved himself to be the stoutest-hearted soldier I've ever known. Nothing was too tough for the old man but the GIs finally knocked him out. He was a real Airedale.

At 0745 hours, Sergeant Boyette saw two American riflemen approaching over Hill 495, toward the group of wounded on Dreikopf and yelled to them. They failed to recognize him, and hit the ground to assume firing positions. Technician Fifth Grade Case and Private First Class Mason then approached the scouts, waving a red cross flag taken from their vehicle. The situation was explained and word passed back that the enemy had withdrawn from the position. Fire of the American artillery on Dreikopf was speedily lifted.

One of the 2½-ton trucks on the positions was repaired without difficulty and this vehicle and the ambulance were loaded with the more seriously wounded for a return to Lampaden where the nearest aid station was located. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt was informed of the new development and soon the evacuation of both wounded and prisoners from Lampaden and Obersehr was in full swing. Technician

Fourth Grade Joseph F. Gaynor of the regimental Medical Detachment who was with the 3d Battalion, 302d, reported the following.

There were many German wounded who insisted on being carried out when a truck was backed up to evacuate them. They insisted they were unable to walk. So the medics, with a weary acceptance of the inevitable, carried them. The truck was well filled with Jerry casualties when it was bracketed with mortar fire. What followed came nearer to breaking our spirits than any of the thousand incidents of the previous twenty-four hours. Those poor, crippled, crying Jerries cleared the truck and found cover in faster time than it takes to tell about it . . . When the fire lifted, they walked to the truck.

The 1st Battalion, 376th, with Company F attached, occupied the Dreikopf area and Company B of the 302d patrolled the Zerf-Pellingen road. A reinforced platoon from the latter company was sent into Paschel.

As the tactical situation eased, the CO of the 376th took the opportunity to make the necessary adjustments in command personnel. Lieutenant Colonel Anderson chose as his Executive Officer Lieutenant Miner of the 1st Battalion. Major Eskel N. Miller, Jr. was transferred from the 3d Battalion and assumed command of the 1st.

## PART SIX

### GERMANY: THE RACE TO THE RHINE

*It is my prejudiced but well founded belief that the three actions of smashing the Siegfried Switch Line—clearing the Saar-Moselle Triangle which culminated in the capture of Trier—forcing the Saar Bridgehead, and the ten-day drive to the Rhine were the outstanding actions of the Third Army's advance to the Rhine.*

MAJOR GENERAL HARRY J. MALONY



## Chapter 38: OUT OF THE BRIDGEHEAD

THE DIVISION was half in and half out of the line on the morning of March 8, 1945 when the Chief of Staff's telephone rang in the CP at Saarburg. Colonel Bergquist picked up the receiver and heard the G-3 of XX Corps say: "We have a change in plans and we don't want the people who are with you to take over any more of the zone than they have now. . . . You are to hold what you have and rest as much of the unit that is out, as possible. . . . I will send complete details up to you by your liaison officer who is here. . . . I think you can anticipate what is up." Colonel Bergquist replied that he understood and the conversation terminated. The relief was to be halted; a new attack was in the making.

At 1215 hours General Walker arrived at the Division command post to confer with General Malony; General Paul, the CG of the 26th Division; the artillery commanders and chiefs of staff of both divisions. The corps commander confirmed the news of the impending attack which was to be launched sometime in the next few days. Following his departure, the conference, at which problems arising from the change in plans were discussed at length, continued. With the southern boundary of the 94th along the line from Saarburg through Zerf, the bulk of the 26th Division was in General Malony's zone. As soon as possible the 101st and 104th Infantry Regiments would have to be moved south. The boundary between the 94th Division and the 10th Armored on the north was also causing trouble. This line, which ran from Ockfen to Kastel, gave the Division a frontage of some ten miles while its rear area tapered down to about two. Therefore, permission was sought and obtained for the 94th to use the roadnet south of a line drawn from Konz-Karthaus to Kastel.

As originally planned, it was decided to relieve the 3d Battalion, 301st, since a portion of this battalion's area was in the 26th Division's zone. The 301st Infantry, which was in reserve, was to return to the lines to take over the front of the 302d. The latter regiment would then become Division reserve until it was time for the attack. Third Cavalry Group was to shift to the north after the 376th relieved their positions on the left of Colonel Hagerty's regiment. While these changes in the front line were under way, the artillery would move forward and service units would cross the Saar to close up behind the combat troops. In close column by night, and by infiltration during daylight hours, the new deployment of the 94th and 26th Divisions began.

On March 8, the 2d Battalion, 376th, which was already reinforcing

the northern sector of Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's battalion, remained in position. Companies K and L of the 301st, now on the left flank of the 26th at Zerf and Ober Zerf, were relieved by the 2d Battalion, 104th, while Company I on Muhlenberg was replaced by Company A of the 302d. Third Battalion, 301st, pulled back to Beurig. The relief continued the following day with Company A and the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 302d turning their sectors over to the 1st and 2d Battalions, 301st, which were brought forward from the rest area, while the 1st Battalion, 376th, assumed the positions formerly held by the 3d Cavalry Group. The 3d Battalion, 376th, moved to regimental reserve at Krettnach-Obermennig, and the 302d Infantry moved across the Saar for several days rest in Division reserve. The 778th Tank Battalion moved to reserve at Tawern. Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan's Ranger battalion, already in Luxembourg, was released from Division control on the 11th. As a result of these shifts and reliefs the line-up from north to south along the Ruwer River ran as follows: 3d Cavalry Group; 1st Battalion, 376th; 2d Battalion, 376th; 1st Battalion, 301st; 2d Battalion, 301st.

XX Corps' plan of attack called for a push to the east as far as the Nahe River. There the corps was to turn northeast, attack up the river valley and seize successive objectives in the vicinity of Oberthal, Oberkirchen, Meisemham, Spreadingen and Mainz-Kastel. The 3d Cavalry Group, on the left of the 94th, was to protect the north flank of XX Corps; while the 80th Division, passing through the southern elements of the 94th and the northern elements of the 26th, was to protect the right flank as it moved forward parallel to General Malony's troops. Pushing south, along the Saar River, the 26th Division was to roll up the Siegfried Line, heading toward Merzig, then turn east toward the Rhine on the right of the rest of the corps.

Within the Division, the thrust eastward was to be made by the 302d Infantry on the north and the 301st on the south. Contact between the right of Colonel Hagerty's regiment and the left of the 80th Division was assigned to the 94th Reconnaissance Troop. The 376th, which was already on line, would remain in place until passed through by Colonel Johnson's men on the morning of the attack. It would then revert to Division reserve. From their positions on line, Colonel Hagerty's troops were to jump off with the 1st and 2d Battalions in the assault. Hermeskeil was the immediate objective. Each of the attacking regiments was assigned an axis of advance with both routes converging on the above town.

On the night of the 12th, last-minute preparations were made and

the battalions of the 302d Infantry moved to their forward assembly areas behind Colonel McClune's front line. To the rear, the Division artillery was poised for the attack. For the initial phase of the operation, the cannon companies of all three regiments had been attached to General Fortier's command. In addition, the artillerymen were to be assisted by the fire power of the 5th and 195th Field Artillery Groups. Patrols from the 319th Engineer Battalion had conducted extensive reconnaissance for suitable bridge sites and fords over the Ruwer River for the preceding four days. Bulldozers and bridging equipment had been brought forward and Lieutenant Colonel Ellis' men were ready for the coming show.

While the men of the 94th Division and the rest of XX Corps made final preparations for this attack, back in Washington, D. C., General of the Army George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, had in his possession a letter from General Eisenhower, dated March 12, 1945, which in part was concerned with the coming offensive:

Tomorrow morning the XX Corps of Patton's Army begins a local attack in the Trier area as a preliminary to the general attack by Seventh Army on the 15th . . . If we can get a quick break-through, the advance should go very rapidly and success in the region will multiply the advantage we have secured in the bridgehead at Remagen. It will probably be a nasty business breaking through the fortified lines, but once this is accomplished losses should not be great and we should capture another big bag of prisoners. I have given Seventh Army 14 divisions for their part of the job, and XX Corps jumps off with four.

At 0300 hours on the morning of March 13, 1945, the stillness of the night was shattered by the thunder of the attack's artillery preparation. Corps and division battalions unleashed the might of their guns and the initial volley of the 105s, 155s, 240s and 8-inch weapons hit the designated target area at the same split second. For fifteen minutes this hellish fire continued, blasting enemy personnel, communications and matériel.

Within the 2d Battalion, 302d, Companies E and F had been designated to lead the attack. The machine guns of Company H were divided between the assault companies and the 81mm mortars contributed direct support. Lieutenant Thomas J. Wellems' platoon of Company B of the 319th Engineers was attached to the battalion and prepared to assist the leading elements by clearing mines or preparing demolitions. Company G, in reserve, was to join the battalion at Schondorf, which was the immediate objective.

While the fearful artillery barrage was still falling on the enemy

side of the Ruwer, the two assault units, led by Company F in a column of platoons, moved to the river directly east of Geizenburg. Short of the river, the head of the column halted momentarily. Instinctively some of the men moved toward the ditches paralleling the road. A series of loud explosions followed and the cry "*Schü mines!*" passed down the files. Quickly ascertaining the extent of the minefield, Lieutenant Wellems set his engineers to work. Eight infantrymen and five engineers fell victim to this first enemy obstacle.

Then the advance continued as the troops waded the Ruwer, hip-deep in the swirling waters. As Company F gained the far shore, the scouts passed back word that German voices could be heard to the front. Captain Kops came forward and, after speaking to the enemy in their own language, convinced them they should surrender. Meanwhile, Company E had crossed, deployed and pushed forward some two hundred yards before it encountered rifle, machine-gun and 88mm fire coming from the high ground northeast of Schondorf. As the company continued forward despite this fire, a direct hit by an 88 knocked out one section of HMGs.

After the first prisoners taken by Company F were searched and sent to the rear under guard, the advance resumed. Within a hundred yards, the leading platoon was engaged by an enemy machine gun located in a house to the right front of the company. A base of fire was established and the 2d Squad of the 3d Platoon moved to outflank the German weapon. This maneuvering element was picked up by a 40mm gun crew who engaged the squad as it advanced by rushes. By 0800 hours the squad had knocked out the machine gun and taken twenty prisoners. Following this, the company continued along the winding road leading into Schondorf. When a 77mm enemy gun engaged the advancing column, Sergeant Paul E. Pflueger led his men against it, speedily silencing the weapon.

As the two companies approached Schondorf, they were again brought under fire. The leading platoon of Company F had gained a foothold in town and a second platoon, organized into assault groups, was about to be committed when two Americans were seen approaching from the direction of the enemy lines. These men, Staff Sergeant Gilbert E. Kenyon and Sergeant Malcolm R. Horton, reported that after accounting for a couple of Germans they had worked their way into town and found the Germans in the process of evacuating. By 1730 hours the town was completely searched and outposted.

During the morning, the 1st Battalion of Colonel Johnson's regiment was ordered from its assembly area in the vicinity of Franzen-

heim. Engineer reconnaissance had located a ford near Gusterath, in the vicinity of a bridge blown by the enemy. This bridge was judged repairable while beyond the river were two wooded draws leading toward Bonerath. Therefore, at about 1000 hours Company B was sent forward to secure this crossing for the battalion. Captain Wancio's men, approaching the river cautiously, easily avoided the hasty mine-field laid by the Germans and gained the far shore without opposition. The 2d Platoon under Technical Sergeant Robert A. Gilbert moved up the right draw, while Technical Sergeant James A. Graham's 3d Platoon searched the one on the left. The remaining rifle platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Odint T. Olsen, held the crossing site while this reconnaissance of the approaches to Bonerath was in progress. At the completion of the search of the southern route to the battalion's first objective, Captain Wancio ordered the 2d Platoon to join the force in the northern draw.

At 1300 hours Companies A and C left their assembly areas, moved to the river and crossed. While the former unit worked forward in the southern valley, Company C, advancing through the thick underbrush of the northern approach, passed through Captain Wancio's men. Both companies then moved to the high ground north of their objective. There they received heavy fire from enemy mortars, artillery and rocket batteries.

Major Meyers, who now commanded the battalion, had decided to take the town with a two-pronged attack which would send Company C eastward while the troops of Company A hit the village from the south flank. Company B, which had moved to positions on the high ground overlooking town, was to protect the heavy machine guns which would support the attack by overhead fire. At 1700 hours the operation began with the men of Companies A and C advancing as skirmishers. To the front of the attacking units, the ground was open and rolling. Due to the formation of the terrain, the objective, which was within a few hundred yards of the assaulting units, was entirely invisible to the troops. However, the twin village of Holzerath, some eight hundred yards to the south, was in full view. Toward this the companies moved.

During the initial phases of the attack, Lieutenant Malachi A. Zecchin radioed the CO of Company A and said: "There's a small village over here to my left. Shall I search it?" Lieutenant Baumgaertner replied, "Hell no! Let's get this town of Bonerath. We'll worry about that other one later." Hence, Companies A and C entered what they thought was their objective, taking the northern and south-

ern corners, respectively. All units pushed forward rapidly. Near the center of town, an 88 opened at almost point-blank range against the advancing infantry. The enemy weapon had excellent infantry support and initial attempts to neutralize or destroy it came to naught. Subsequently, Sergeant Myron L. Wagner managed to work his way to within bazooka range and let fly. He scored a hit, but the round failed to explode. Nevertheless, the enemy gunners had had enough and withdrew. Following this, the remainder of the town was taken without difficulty.

Once the village was cleared, Lieutenant Baumgaertner radioed Major Meyers that Bonerath had fallen; the CP could move forward. Gathering his command group and the 1st Platoon of Company A which had been holding the bridgehead east of Geizenburg, the battalion commander moved out. Seeing no sign of either of the assault companies at the edge of town, the major had a civilian interrogated. This German was as cooperative as his information was startling.

At approximately this same time, the CO of Company A noticed a column of Germans moving along the road leading northeast from the town in which he was located and called for an artillery concentration. (There was a similar road leading out of Bonerath.) The artillery replied promptly with "on the way" and Lieutenant Baumgaertner waited. To his disgust, the rounds were at least two thousand yards off the target. When a confirming round was requested, this too fell in the area of the first concentration. Fearing the worst, the lieutenant sent a runner to check the signpost on the outskirts of town while the machine gunners of Company C engaged the retreating Germans. On his return the runner announced: "The sign sez Holzerath."

A hasty radio message was dispatched to battalion, warning against any movement into Bonerath. In reply, the CO of the 1st Battalion informed his forces in Holzerath that their real objective had been taken without opposition by the 1st Platoon of Company A and the command group. Later interrogation of prisoners revealed that the enemy had abandoned Bonerath to make a more determined stand in the twin town to the south. Companies A and C had swept into the town while preparations for its defense were still in progress.

Subsequent to the crossing of the 2d Battalion, the engineers moved forward and discovered it would be impossible to construct a treadway bridge in the vicinity of their crossing. Captain Harold J. Helbling informed regiment of this fact, suggesting that the bridge to the north, at the ford used by the 1st Battalion, be repaired. This recommendation was approved. By 1300 Lieutenant Bailey's platoon and a caterpillar



*Repaired bridge over the Ruwer River in the vicinity of Pluwig*

tractor were moving up the river to prepare the approaches. Three hours later they had accomplished this task and the existing bridge was made serviceable by the construction of a culvert and fill. Around midnight the reconstructed bridge was open to traffic. Battery A of the 465th AAA Battalion crossed during the night, moving to the high ground north of Bonerath.

To the south, the 301st Infantry also had been busy. The 3d Battalion, which had taken over the left of the regimental line, was to cross the Ruwer by the railroad bridge northeast of Lampaden to drive toward Heddert. At the same time the 1st Battalion was to cross on the footbridge southeast of Lampaden below Berg Heid and extend to the left until it made contact with Major O'Neil's men. These two drives would clear a bridgehead and secure the roadnet leading eastward, in the assigned zone of the 301st Infantry. Company A, 319th Engineers, could then erect a vehicular bridge to support the southern flank of the Division attack.

Both the foot and railroad bridges were known to be intact, so prior to the attack each battalion sent a platoon to secure these crossings. Without difficulty, the railroad bridge and the area surrounding it were



taken, but the 3d Platoon of Company A moving to seize the southern crossing was less fortunate. It crossed the foot bridge by infiltration, the men taking shelter around a mill on the far shore. With the entire platoon across, the scouts moved forward to the nearest high ground. It was then the enemy elected to reveal their positions. They did so with a volley of rifle and machine-gun fire. Immediately, the platoon took cover in some abandoned German foxholes and attempted to work a flanking group against the enemy position. Fire from the high ground stalled all American efforts and the platoon, after sending a runner to inform battalion of the existing situation, settled down to hold its slender bridgehead.

At 0300 hours, under the terrific artillery barrage that preceded the attack, Company A, commanded by Captain Howard W. McKee, pushed into the 3d Platoon's bridgehead. Moving along the sides of the mill, the company fought its way to the railroad tracks paralleling the river. There it met a deluge of small-arms fire and hand grenades. A fierce fire fight developed in which every attempt to cross the tracks was stopped by the enemy. Staff Sergeant Hubert Mikukenka moved his machine-gun section to the north end of a deep cut to support the left flank of the unit. As his crew went into position, an enemy automatic weapon opened fire destroying the piece.

About daylight, under the overhead fire of the battalion's HMGs, Company C began its crossing. Once on the east bank of the Ruwer, the 1st Platoon moved to the right of Company A, crossed the tracks by employing marching fire, and assaulted the high ground beyond where an enemy machine-gun position was overrun and twelve prisoners taken.

Company B, the battalion reserve, followed. The account below is by an anonymous member of the 1st Platoon of Company B.

"Moving up!" [came the cry]. "Damn it! Every time I open a K ration . . ." "Listen you guys! When we hit that curve down there we'll find an open space. About seventy-five yards. Planks across the creek and thirty more yards to the mill. Three at a time. Quick! See! Mortars coming in all the time and snipers too. Hold it up at the back of the mill. Second Platoon's there. Got it? Any questions? Good, let's go! Shep, Frenchy, Jesco. You three first. Remember, fast!"

The next three men to go made even better time dashing across the foot-bridge and up to the mill. Finally all of the platoon was huddled close to the back of the building. The 2d Platoon had already moved out and rifle fire was cracking up ahead. We could hear the shouts and curses of the men above it all.

"What are we going to do?" "Stay right here for awhile." "Why?"



**Berg Heid Castle**

"Because we're reserve platoon." "Here comes the 3d Platoon!" Mortar fire was really pouring in and our hearts were in our mouths as we watched some of the boys hit the dirt. "Damn! They were close." "Nobody's hit." The 3d Platoon rose and moved on.

"The 1st Platoon will remain at the mill." Now is a good time to describe it. It stood alone between three hills. To its rear ran the Ruwer River. Alongside of it was a small creek of fast-moving water used to turn a large water-wheel. The mill had been taken by a platoon from Company A and was being used as a temporary CP by both A and B Companies. About the mill were five Yanks lying where they had fallen. Killed trying to take the damn place! One was half hanging in the creek face down. Another was lying face down nearby. "Who is it? Turn him over." "Can't!" "Why?" "I'm afraid I'll know him."

Meanwhile, Yank wounded and Jerry prisoners were coming back. As one short, fat, little guy came limping back somebody yelled, "What's it like up there?" He smiled and said, "Just like shooting rabbits." We could see why he was smiling. He had a million dollar wound and was going back for a good rest.

With the coming of light, the volume of enemy artillery and mortar

fire falling in the valley of the Ruwer made construction of a treadway bridge impossible. Smoke was placed on the high ground east of the river which caused the German fire to slacken as observation became obscured. Following this, construction began and a bridge was rapidly completed.

Company A, meanwhile, turned to the north to take Berg Heid and make contact with the 3d Battalion. Instead of a village, the troops found a castle surrounded by a high wall. The machine-gun section was called forward to support an assault and was going into action as a column of twenty-five Germans came into view. This enemy group was promptly engaged and decimated. Without opposition, at 1430 hours the castle itself fell.

Back at the bridge site the supporting tanks and TDs encountered considerable difficulty in negotiating a crossing. Between the east approach of the bridge and the road beyond the ground was extremely soft. It was only by routing each vehicle over a slightly different course, once it had crossed, that sufficient flotation was achieved to reach the road. Shortly before dark the last of the tracklaying vehicles crossed. Two TDs were put at the head of the column and the platoon of Company A, which was still at the mill, mounted the tanks to furnish local security. This column then started north and reached Berg Heid without incident.

At the footbridge to the north, Company I of the 301st crossed on schedule without opposition from the enemy. The company pushed forward and had started up the high ground to the front when it was hit by an artillery concentration which inflicted nine casualties on the support platoon. As this fire lifted, the advance resumed and daylight found the troops in possession of the crest of the ridge. To clear the houses in the valley most of the company pushed down the far slope of the hill while Company K, which had crossed behind Company I, moved to the right flank of the battalion line.

At about this time, the 1st Platoon of Company I, atop the ridge, was hit by a local counterattack which they repelled after some close and difficult fighting. Eleven prisoners were taken, seven Germans killed, and two more wounded. Companies I and K next moved south-east, along the high ground toward the 1st Battalion, against increasing enemy opposition which caused the leading elements to give way to the left. Consequently, Company L, which had also crossed by this time, moved into position to protect the battalion right flank. Late in the afternoon the company was hit by a vicious counterattack from the





*Infantry-tank cooperation. In the distance, the burst of American white phosphorus shells can be seen.*

hill west of Heddert. Until elements of Company K outflanked the counterattacking force and came up in its rear, the situation remained fluid. The battalion then halted to reorganize.

With the arrival of its armor, the 1st Battalion, 301st, continued to advance along the road running northward from Berg Heid. Progress was extremely slow; the enemy in withdrawing had felled trees across the road. Throughout the night, the infantry and attached engineers worked on these roadblocks and late on the morning of the 14th made contact with the 3d Battalion.

As a result of the operations on the 13th, the Division penetrated the German line in two places to a depth of three thousand yards and sent 129 prisoners back to the PW cages.

## *Chapter 39: PUSH TO THE EAST*

**O**RDERS FROM REGIMENT sent the 1st Battalion, 302d, eastward again on the morning of March 14, to take its next immediate objective, the high ground to the east of Holzerath. Once this had been seized, the attack would continue east to Check Point 1, a road junction west of Hill 708 and about 3,500 yards beyond Holzerath. There contact was to be made with the 2d Battalion, 302d, which was also continuing its attack.

At 0700 hours Companies A and C, both badly under strength, jumped off supported by a platoon of tanks from Company A of the 778th Tank Battalion. The line of departure was crossed with Company A on the north, the tanks in the center and Company C on the south. All units moved forward rapidly and were halfway up the hill beyond town before the enemy opened fire with small-arms and self-propelled 88s which drove back the attack. The tanks and Company A, which had suffered very heavy casualties, returned to Holzerath while Company C took positions in the woods directly south of the hill.

With the same forces participating, a second attack was launched at 1600 hours. This thrust took the hill but netted only fifteen prisoners. While the rest of the battalion prepared to continue the attack according to plan, Company A was ordered to hold the objective and the crossroads adjacent to it. With Company B, which had been brought up from reserve, taking the lead, the new drive began at 2200 hours. The night was inky black, the rate of march rapid. Luminous enemy road markers were frequently encountered, along with road-blocks and felled trees. After an advance of some two thousand yards, the head of the column was engaged by a direct-fire artillery piece and four men were wounded. As the leading elements returned fire, the enemy weapon, an assault gun, withdrew. The advance continued. In the vicinity of Check Point 1, the Germans again attempted a delaying action. This time the force involved consisted of an armored vehicle supported by a few infantry. A sharp fire fight caused the enemy to fall back again. Finding no sign of the 2d Battalion at Check Point 1, Major Meyers pulled back his troops to the last high ground and prepared positions for what was left of the night.

For the continuation of the advance on the 14th, Major Maixner ordered Company G, in reserve, to cross the Ruwer River and move to Holzerath. There at 1630 hours, Company E was to join Company G; together they would push eastward along a road net generally parallel to and south of Major Meyers' route of advance with contact to





*His clothing in rags, his face drawn with pain, a walking wounded makes his way to the aid station in Holzerath*



be made at Check Point 1. Because of the amount of enemy artillery fire falling on Holzerath, Company E avoided the town. Junction with Company G was made five hundred yards to the east of the assigned rendezvous. From there the advance continued in a column of companies. Company G led, followed by the platoon of attached tanks and Company E. At approximately 0300 hours, the leading elements reached the vicinity of Check Point 1. A perimeter was formed by the riflemen and into this the armor moved. Two reconnaissance patrols, one under Lieutenant Davis F. Nations and the other led by Staff Sergeant James L. Mundy, moved to the rendezvous point in search of the 1st Battalion. Lieutenant Nation's patrol returned shortly, reporting no sign of Major Meyers' troops. Following this, footsteps were heard and the men on the perimeter challenged what they thought was the second patrol. From the darkness a voice spoke in broken English: "I want to surrender." One of the tankers, standing next to his vehicle, asked the would-be-POW if he was alone. Reply came in the form of a *Panzerfaust*, which struck the tank, smashing a track. In the confusion the enemy group escaped.

During the early hours of the 15th, contact between the 1st and 2d Battalions, 302d, was made by radio and plans were laid for a coordinated attack on Hill 708 and the town of Reinsfeld beyond it. At 0600 hours, with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 2d on the right, this attack jumped off.

After advancing some four hundred yards, the 2d Platoon of Company G encountered a German self-propelled 77mm gun. Its crew went into action and the artillery forward observer with the company rapidly adjusted on the enemy weapon. As the American fire fell, the crew of the assault gun set fire to their piece and abandoned the position. The advance was resumed and, after some stiff fighting in which a number of machine-gun positions were overwhelmed and *Panzerfaust* teams knocked out, the hill was taken.

Both battalions reorganized at 1230 hours to continue the attack toward Reinsfeld. As Major Maixner's troops advanced, two enemy assault guns opened fire knocking out their leading tank. This vehicle burst into flames and all but one of the crew escaped. Seeing this, Captain Kops of Company F dashed to the burning tank and without assistance succeeded in rescuing the injured man. Meanwhile, one of the enemy guns was eliminated by a second tank and the remaining 88 withdrew. Armor and infantry then swept to the edge of the woods west of Reinsfeld from which, at 1545 hours, Lieutenant Baumgaertner observed a German artillery battery harnessing its horses and prepar-

ing to move. He requested a fire mission of his forward observer and the resulting concentrations annihilated both gunners and their mounts. Not a single man or horse escaped the carnage.

Again the battalions reorganized, preparatory to continuing the attack under cover of darkness. At 2000 hours the troops moved from the woods and quickly crossed the open ground separating them from the town. There was some light resistance from the enemy, but within an hour and a half Reinsfeld was cleared and outposted. The tired troops organized the position and waited for the 3d Battalion, which had been in reserve since the beginning of the drive, to pass through them the following morning.

In Colonel Hagerty's sector the 3d Battalion, 301st, and its supporting units advanced against Heddert, some 2,500 yards east of Berg Heid, on the morning of the 14th while the 1st Battalion was mopping up what enemy resistance remained between the bridge site and the initial objective. Following an artillery preparation, the men of Major O'Neil's battalion swept into Heddert which they cleared of all resistance by 1245 hours. Companies I and K then pushed on and had secured the high ground to the east and northeast by dark.

To the right of General Malony's troops, the 80th Division which had advanced far beyond Zerf, reported it was receiving German sniper and artillery fire from the zone of the 94th in this vicinity. Therefore, the 2d Battalion, 301st, was assigned the mission of clearing the extreme right of the Division area and flanking the Germans still in position on the hills overlooking Berg Heid and the bridge site. From Zerf, Major Brumley's men jumped off at 0500 hours on the morning of the 14th, attacking northeast against Hill 489. Apparently the enemy had been expecting an American thrust from the direction of Heddert and was caught off guard. By mid-morning the hill was cleared. After a speedy reorganization, the battalion continued northeast through a heavily wooded area. Progress was slow, particularly during the late afternoon when roadblocks, antipersonnel minefields and machine-gun positions were encountered. When the advance halted for the night, enemy artillery began to hit the battalion and the companies were drawn back a short distance.

At 0500 hours on the morning of the 15th the 3d Battalion, 301st, jumped off from Heddert to take the town of Schillingen. Plan of attack called for Company I to flank the village and assault from the north while Company K pushed forward from the west. The night was



*As enemy shells whistle into Schillingen, two infantrymen (right foreground) dash for cover beside a tank while a medic (left foreground) takes shelter beside a compost pile*

extremely dark and complete control became almost impossible. At daylight the attackers were on the outskirts of their objective but the CO of Company K, Captain William C. Warren, discovered that his 3d Platoon, part of company headquarters, the mortar section and a section of HMGs attached from Company M were missing. Nevertheless, he pushed off and by 0900 hours Company K had cleared the town.

Meanwhile, those elements of Company K which had gone astray were launching an attack of their own. As darkness faded, a town loomed directly in front of the separated elements of Captain Warren's company. This they assumed was their objective and stormed forward, taking half the town, an enemy command post and three German officers with only slight opposition. As determined fighting developed in the streets, a Company I radio message was overheard which reported no opposition in Schillingen. This established the fact that the wrong town had been entered. After clearing the rest of the village and destroying an enemy artillery battery, the party learned it had taken Nieder Kell, approximately 1,500 yards south of the real objective. Hurriedly collecting their prisoners, the lost elements of Company K marched north to Schillingen.

In Schillingen, Colonel Hagerty arrived shortly after the town was cleared and ordered the attack continued eastward to Kell. Originally



*Medics attend a member of the 301st Infantry whose leg has been amputated by a shell fragment during the advance to Kell*

the latter town was an assigned objective of the 1st Battalion which was bypassing Schillingen. Major O'Neil's men moved forward immediately to join in the attack which cleared the town by 1430 hours.

With the reduction of Kell, the 1st Battalion started for Gusenburg, their next objective. Company C, which was leading, had advanced only a few hundred yards before it was halted by machine-gun and 88mm fire. Attempts to outflank the enemy positions proved unsuccessful until several of the multiple guns of the 465th AAA Battalion sprayed the enemy held area with the fire of their .50-calibers. This proved too much for the Germans who withdrew. It was now almost dark and the battalion pressed forward into the thick forests separating it from the next objective. Again, felled trees and road obstacles slowed the advance. At the edge of the woods, west of the objective, the battalion formed for the attack with Company B on the left and Company A on the right. Then, the troops debouched from the woods as skirmishers and swept onward. At 2300 hours the outskirts of Gusenburg were reached, without a shot being fired. The companies crept silently into town, searching houses and routing sleepy Germans out of their billets. By 2345 hours, the whole town had been checked thoroughly and outposts had been established on all roads leading into the village.

A short time later, an enemy motor column was heard approaching Gusenburg. Unchallenged, the German vehicles were allowed to pass the first American position. They were then sealed off and captured. By morning several other vehicles had been added to the collection,

including a trailer-truck carrying over two thousand gallons of gasoline sorely needed by the enemy's tanks and self-propelled weapons.

Far to the rear of the rest of the 94th, the 2d Battalion, 301st, clearing the right flank of the Division zone, also had a busy day on the 15th. As the Germans fell back in the face of their onslaughts, Major Brumley's men pushed northwest through the woods toward Heddert. Many of the enemy were rounded up by one of the batteries of the 301st Field Artillery which had crossed the Ruwer and assumed positions south of Heddert. While the artillerymen were only slightly less surprised than their captives, at this turn of events, they had reacted more quickly. Upon the completion of this clean-up task, the 2d Battalion moved into Heddert.

At 0200 hours on the morning of the 16th, the 2d Battalion came forward by marching, to pass through the 1st Battalion and continue the drive to Hermeskeil. Just as dawn was breaking, Major Brumley's men passed through Gusenburg to swing to the northeast against the new objective. Unknown to the battalion commander, an air mission had been requested and, as the assault troops moved against Hermeskeil, a squadron of P-47s swept down for a bombing run. Huge columns of smoke and debris rose in the town; the infantrymen took what cover they could find. A yellow smoke grenade, signifying friendly troops, was uncorked before the planes began strafing and as the fighter-bombers pulled away, the battalion gave vent to a collective sigh of relief before continuing the attack. Resistance encountered in Hermeskeil was sporadic and by 1000 hours fighting within the town had ended. The 301st Infantry then reverted to Division reserve as the 376th came forward to continue the advance.

During the morning of the 15th, the 376th Infantry was ordered to clear Hinzenburg, and assigned the task to Company B. This town, located across the Ruwer River, southeast of Ollmuth, had been bypassed in the advance of the 302d Infantry. The mission was completed by 1100 hours and the company moved on to secure the high ground beyond. At the same time, the 2d Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel Anderson's regiment entrucked and moved to the vicinity of Heddert while the 3d Battalion moved by motor to an assembly area in the woods just west of Schillingen.

At 2000 hours the same evening the 3d Battalion, 376th, set out on foot to take its first objective, the town of Grimburg, east and south of Schillingen. The night was clear and visibility was further improved by artificial moonlight produced by searchlight battalions far to the



*Hermeskeil*

south. Organic transportation and the antitank guns were left at Schillingen. The column moved off, preceded by the 2d Platoon of Company I, mounted on a platoon of light tanks. Roadblocks in the heavy woods between the battalion and its objective halted the advance of the tanks, following which the infantry proceeded alone. Just short of Grimburg, German outposts challenged the leading scouts who hastily withdrew to select an alternate route. Then the town was entered without opposition as the enemy garrison was completely unaware there were Americans in the vicinity. By 0300 hours Grimburg was cleared and outposted. Antitank mines were laid across the roads and these were covered by bazooka positions. Those troops not engaged in manning the defenses of the town were soon comfortably settled down and asleep.

Elements of the 10th Armored Division had been committed in the division zone and at 0740 hours on the 16th, Task Force Richardson rolled into Grimburg. The 301st Infantry, after reverting to reserve, had been attached to the armored division along with Company A of the 319th Medical Battalion and one platoon of Company A of the 319th Engineers. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion, 376th, had pushed forward to seize Sitzerath and Bierfeld.

In the attack on the former objective, Captain Ralph T. Brown, commanding Company K, located a well camouflaged enemy 77mm artillery piece which commanded his company's route of advance, holding up the attack. Arming himself with a grenade launcher, the CO of Company K courageously assaulted the German gun, which was protected by several rocket-launcher teams. Although he was observed and seriously wounded by almost point-blank fire from the enemy position, the captain forced the withdrawal of the rocket-launcher teams. This permitted friendly tanks to advance and silence the artillery piece. Tanks and infantry then successfully stormed Sitzerath. In like manner, Bierfeld was taken and Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men pushed to Nonnweiler only to find that the armored task force had beaten them to this objective.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 376th, kept closely in touch with the situation, prepared to take over the attack upon orders. At 0915 hours on the 16th, the latter battalion marched to Grimburg and from there to Sitzerath where it spent the night. The 1st Battalion left Franzenheim at 1415 hours and arrived at Grimburg five hours later.

On the morning of the 16th at 0815 hours, the 3d Battalion, 302d, attacked southeast from Reinsfeld in the face of heavy rocket and artillery fire that failed to halt its advance. Beyond the town the battalion stormed into an area infested with enemy pillboxes and bunkers. One by one these were assaulted, reduced and then manned by men of Company I until they could be demolished by the engineers. In this manner thirty-seven pillboxes were reduced. Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's men then continued to the southeast and by 1740 hours they had reached Hermeskeil.

During the 14th, 15th and 16th of March, the attack of the 94th continued to gain momentum. On the 14th, the Division front line moved forward about two thousand yards and 344 prisoners were added to the ever-mounting total to the credit of the Division. On the following day both assault regiments, the 301st and the 302d, turned in gains of approximately ten thousand yards apiece and sent 341 more PWs to the Division cage. On the 16th, Colonels Hagerty and Johnson pressed their advantages. What had been a fairly well ordered German retreat became a rout. The day's advance was measured in miles and the 94th continued to lead the other divisions of XX Corps. As a result of this day's fighting more than 700 prisoners were taken.



## Chapter 40: THE PURSUIT

**B**Y MARCH 17 organized German resistance along the front of the 94th Division had begun to collapse. Little opposition was met in any of the towns taken and similar conditions were being reported all along the adjoining fronts. The enemy was beaten and fleeing. From Division came the order to pursue. The next stop was the Rhine!

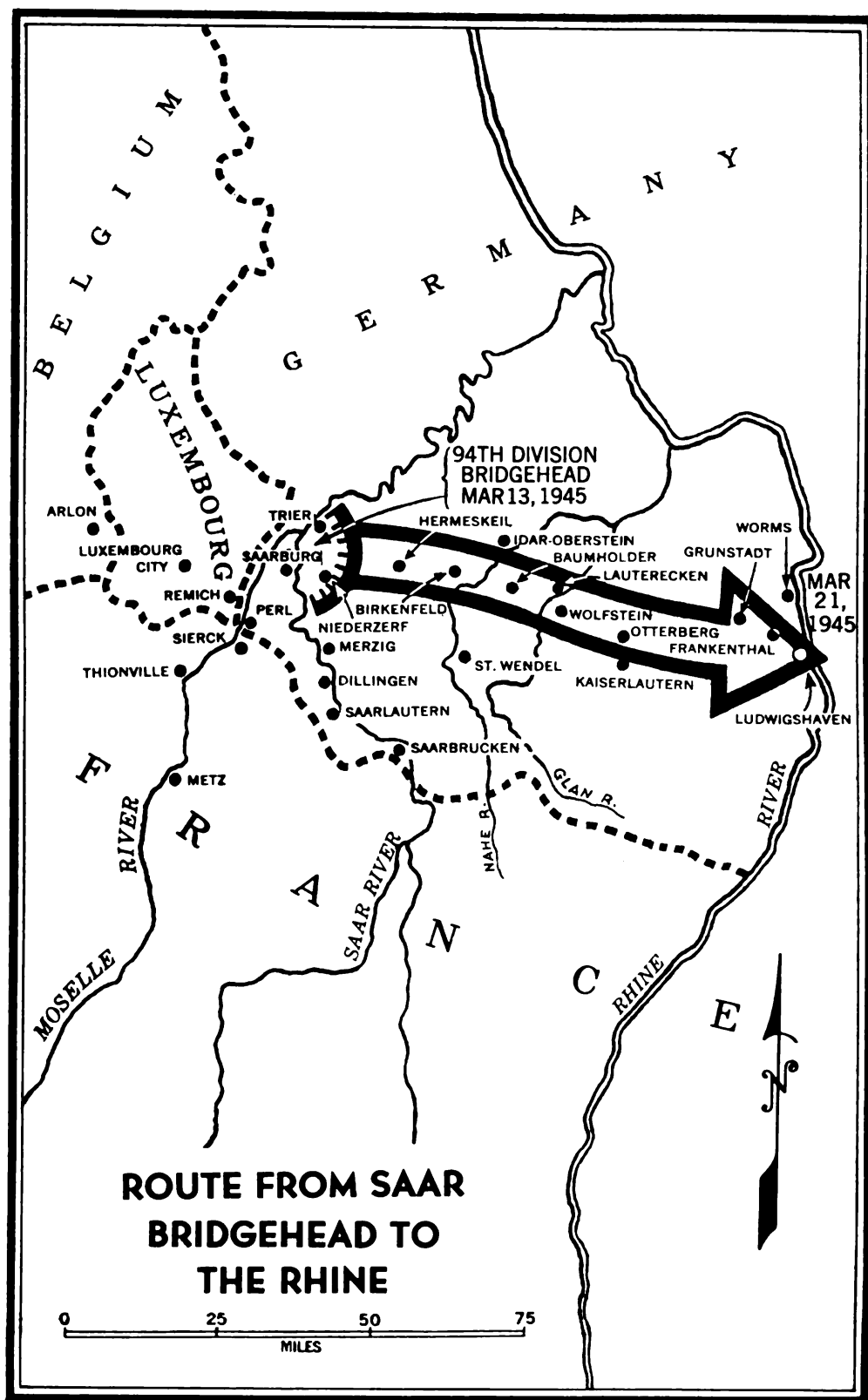
To facilitate a speedy continuation of the push, the CG of the 94th formed his two remaining regiments into combat teams and motorized their infantry elements. Each of the regimental CTs was reinforced with attachments from the tank, AAA and chemical mortar battalions at the Division's disposal.

At 0815 hours on the 17th, the 3d Battalion, 302d, left Hermeskeil with Zusch as its immediate objective. Initially the advance was impeded by a series of roadblocks and abatis which were covered by enemy automatic-weapons fire. For seven hours progress was slow; it was not until 1530 hours that Zusch was taken. The battalion was behind schedule, but renewed efforts gained twenty kilometers in the following five hours netting the towns of Schmelz, Neu hutten, Zinser-shutten, Adentheuer, Buhlenberg, Ellenberg, Feckweiler and the ultimate objective of the day's advance, Birkenfeld.

Along the southern axis of the Division's attack, the 376th Infantry also was having a field day. The 2d Battalion passed through Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's positions at Nonnweiler and had taken Otzenhausen by 0810 hours. Before noon Schwarzenback was added to the bag. During the afternoon, the 2d Battalion seized Eisen and Achtelsbach. By this time the attack had become an endurance contest. Objectives fell as fast as troops could get to them. During the afternoon, the 1st Battalion, 376th, was ordered to pass through the 2d Battalion and at 2130 hours the leading elements of Lieutenant Colonel Hodges' command left Achtelsbach and took Brucken. They continued on through the night making contact with Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's 3d Battalion, 302d, in Birkenfeld. In Elchweiler, a few *Volkssturm* troops put up a token resistance, but were soon overwhelmed and the town cleared.

The Reconnaissance Troop was likewise busy during the day of the 17th. In addition to keeping contact with the 80th Division, it added Wadrill, Gehweiler, Oberlostern and Kostenbach to the total of towns taken by the Division and captured two German tanks and an AA gun.

Echeloned to the right rear of the 94th, the 80th Division encountered a similar situation along its front. Combat Command A of the 10th Armored Division operating in its zone, reported its leading



elements as Türkismühle while Combat Command B, in the zone of the 94th, rolled to Birkenfeld and then turned south into the 80th Division's sector. This action outflanked much of the enemy resistance to the south. To the north and in rear of the 94th, the 3d Cavalry Group was attacking southeast and had reached Beuren and Prostrath. During the day the 12th Armored Division came under control of XX Corps and was assembling in Trier for employment the following day in the 94th's sector. The Division had advanced some twenty miles, taken forty towns and captured over 1,500 PWs. Still it continued to lead the corps, several miles in advance of the units on its flanks.

The speed of the advance prevented the issuance of field orders for each new objective and the G-3 section solved this problem by preparing supplements to the basic order. In some cases it became necessary to issue several of these in a single day. Liaison officers and check points were relied upon to keep the regimental and Division staffs informed of the location of the plunging spearheads.

The 302d Combat Team continued its advance to the east on the morning of the 18th as Lieutenant Colonel Cloudt's 3d Battalion jumped off at 0805 hours. Against practically no resistance, the towns of Rimsberg, Bohen, Reichenbach, Baumholder and Breitsesterhof were taken. The battalion outposted Baumholder while Major Meyers' troops passed through to take Mambachel. As the day ended the 2d Battalion, in regimental reserve, moved forward to Birkenfeld.

On the southern flank of the Division, the 376th Combat Team also moved forward in *Blitzkrieg* style. After it reached Elchweiler, northeast of Birkenfeld, the 1st Battalion received a change of orders and had to backtrack to the latter town. It turned south, took Hoppstadten, then continued toward Heimbach. Outside the latter town, an armored column was being delayed by the fire of enemy antiaircraft guns employed as ground weapons. These guns had already knocked out two tanks when Major Miller offered to have his infantry flank the position. This assistance was declined; the battalion remained immobile for four hours. An air mission was requested by the armor and intermittently for two hours P-51s bombed and strafed the 20mm and 88mm flak guns. When the road was finally cleared, the battalion moved into town and from there advanced to Mettweiler. Within the latter town, some of the remnants of the 256th Volksgrenadier Division, first encountered by the 94th in the Triangle, were taken prisoner.



*Division motor column near Reichenbach*

Remaining in regimental reserve, the 2d Battalion, 376th, moved from Achtersbach to Hoppstadten. At 0900 hours the 3d Battalion left Nonnweiler, passed through Heimbach and seized Berlangenbach, which had been bypassed, and there they spent the night,

At 1100 hours on March 17, 1945, Colonel Hagerty's command reverted to General Malony's control and was again designated division reserve. The 301st was ordered to maintain contact with the forward elements of the 94th and to be prepared for commitment through either of the other infantry regiments or on their flanks.

During the day, the Reconnaissance Troop took Bimbweiler and Leitzweiler while maintaining contact between the 94th and 80th Divisions. The 80th proceeded to Eiwiler and Mettnich, and elements of the 12th Armored Division advanced to Gruenbach and Mettweiler.

Typical of western Germany, the country through which the troops of the 94th were advancing was rural and picturesque. Hills were frequent and often covered with thick pine forest, the trees of which were planted in long even rows. Clear, cold streams and rivulets abounded, running down to wide, lovely valleys which were cultivated intensely and dotted with neat little villages that might have been lifted out of some fairy tale.

Along the roads were numerous evidences of the might of the Army Air Forces supporting the advance. Again and again, the wreckage of



*Out of action*

burnt and gutted German columns was encountered. Vehicles, tanks, kitchens, ambulances, supply wagons, ammunition carts, field pieces and dead horses were a common sight. In some cases, motor vehicles and tanks had been abandoned undamaged when they ran out of fuel. As the tempo of the advance quickened and the retreat became a complete rout, German soldiers began to appear in ever-increasing numbers. After a time the take of PWs became so great it was impossible to assign guards to convoy them to the rear. One *Wehrmacht* sergeant, leading a group of ex-Supermen, carried on his chest a sign which he seemed to consider a safe conduct pass. It read: "I was captured by Ceramic." (Code name for the 376th Infantry.) To round up and evacuate these groups, the Division Military Police Platoon was hard pressed. Special PW teams had to be formed. Gradually though, the droves of prisoners were herded into the 94th's overcrowded enclosures.

On the 19th of March, the mad dash for the Rhine continued. Against negligible opposition, the 1st Battalion, 302d, moved eastward, advancing twenty-two miles, clearing eighteen towns, including the city of Lauterecken located on the Glan River, and taking an undetermined number of prisoners. The motorized columns of the 2d Battalion moved to Heinzenhausen where they prepared to pass through Major Meyers' men and continue the attack on the 20th. The 3d Battalion assembled in Baumholder, ready to move forward on orders.

Along the southern axis of advance, the 1st Battalion, 376th, moved through the 3d Battalion to add Thalichtenberg, Korborn, Dennweiler, Oberalban, Ulmet, Erdesbach, Patersbach, Bedesbach, Welchweiler,

Elzweiler, Horschbach, Hinzweiler, Aschbach and Wolfstein to the long list of towns taken. While the battalion was advancing on Morbach, there was a second change of route. The 3d Battalion shuttled to Bedesbach and the 2d assembled in Olsbrücken in readiness to pass through Major Miller's men for a continuation of the drive eastward.

Each passing day communications with and control of the advancing battalions became increasingly difficult. Moreover, the division had completely outdistanced the units on its flanks. The infantry, in several cases, was far in front of the armor that was to support it. In an attempt to improve the situation, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop was given the additional mission of maintaining contact between the leading infantry assault teams and those armored columns in or adjacent to the division zone. While performing this task, Captain Ashton's men overran and captured an enemy vehicle column loaded with supplies and equipment.

The day's operation showed the Division had taken thirty-three more towns, over three thousand prisoners, and numerous guns, howitzers and vehicles, in addition to huge supplies of equipment and munitions.

On the 20th the action was merely a continuation of the previous day's activities. In the zone of the 302d Combat Team, battalions continued to leap-frog one another and thirteen more towns were added to the regiment's total. Outside the city of Grunstadt, the enemy offered some resistance when approximately 150 Germans armed with rifles and automatic weapons manned a roadblock and went into action. There was a brief fight, but soon more PWs were streaming to the rear.

In the sector of the 376th Combat Team, the 2d Battalion continued the drive eastward after spending a cold, uncomfortable night huddled in their halted trucks. These troops passed through the 1st Battalion to close in Neunkirchen at 1600 hours. From there they pressed forward toward Enkenbach and Carlsberg, the regimental objective for the day. Enemy troops in position in the woods southeast of the former town had halted advance elements of the 12th Armored Division, attempting to cut the *Reichs-Autobahn*, stretching through Kaiserslautern to the Rhine, and knocked out fifteen American tanks. Upon arriving, the 3d Battalion dismounted, deployed and moved against the enemy strongpoint. Although the Germans were well situated and heavily armed, there was little resistance. A mass surrender was soon under way.





*On orders of G-5, citizens of Lauterecken fill the tank traps surrounding their city*

Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men then continued south until they reached the *Autobahn*; there the tankers and infantrymen turned east. Carlsberg fell to the 3d Battalion before the end of the day. There they spent the night. To the rear, the 1st Battalion set up in Otterberg while the 2d Battalion billeted in Neunkirchen.

After the fall of Grunstadt, the 2d Battalion, 302d, continued forward through the night. The valley of the Rhine had been reached and the river itself lay some twenty kilometers to the east. The combat team had completely outdistanced those armored elements committed in its zone and Colonel Johnson's men were determined to be the first troops of the XX corps to reach the river. As the battalion pushed forward in the darkness, the tail of the column, consisting of the reserve company, the heavy weapons company and a portion of the battalion headquarters company, took a wrong turn and were soon lost. Captain Burgess G. Hodges, the battalion executive officer, took charge as soon as the mistake was discovered. After a hasty reconnaissance, he turned the column about and started in quest of the rest of the 2d Battalion. Mile after mile, through town after town, the column roared. Still there was no sign of the leading companies. Then as the lost elements rolled into the outskirts of a huge city, Captain Hodges

halted the convoy, taking off on foot to investigate a small light which blinked alternately green and yellow, directly to the front. In seconds he was back, on the double, to report a huge German tank lumbering down the road.

The troops were ordered off their trucks immediately. Staff Sergeant Aaron L. Kupferschmidt led forward a bazooka team which worked to within a few yards of the panzer and went into action. However, their weapon had developed a malfunction and would not fire. Unable to locate the rest of their 57mm gun crew, Staff Sergeant Joseph R. Frantz and Private First Class Jack S. Crayne were attempting to get their weapon into firing position when the enemy tank opened up. Its first round was high, the second hit the leading truck squarely and subsequent rounds demolished the 2½-ton truck and set fire to a jeep. Then, the 57 opened fire, aiming at the muzzle blast of the German tank. There was little hope of stopping the enemy vehicle, but at least a diversion might be created in which the undamaged vehicles could be withdrawn. To the rear, Captain Hodges turned the column while the understrength gun crew used up the last of their ammunition. Loading the wounded first and then the rest of the troops, a hasty withdrawal began. Obviously, Major Maixner and the rest of the battalion had not yet taken the town.

At 0900 hours the following morning, what were supposedly the leading elements of the 2d Battalion made contact with Captain Hodges and his men. TDs mounting 90mm guns were spearheading the advance. Once the battalion had been reorganized, the push eastward continued. At the scene of the previous night's encounter the wreckage of the 2½-ton truck and jeep were located. The 57mm gun, which had suffered a sprung trail, was recovered and salvaged. Farther beyond was a Panther tank which had been hit three times. The sign post outside the city read: Frankenthal.

Within the town little resistance was encountered by the 2d Battalion, and the column pressed forward toward the last objective, the Rhine River, now in sight. By 1215 hours on the 21st of March, the 2d Battalion, 302d, was in Petersau, a small town on the very bank of the river, northeast of Frankenthal. The leading element of the XX Corps had reached the Rhine!

The 1st Battalion, 376th, moved from Otterberg on the 21st, passed through the 3d Battalion in Carlsberg at 1100 hours and proceeded to Studernheim where the companies detrucked and proceeded into Oppau on foot.

The 3d Battalion, 302d, closed in Frankenthal late on the 21st and moved immediately to Oppau where it took positions along the Rhine. The 1st Battalion, 302d, was also brought forward arriving in Frankenthal about 2100 hours. In the 376th Infantry, the 2d and 3d Battalions moved to Oggersheim, located just west of Ludwigshafen, with the latter unit closing there at 1330 on the 22d of March. During the drive eastward the 301st Infantry came forward by bounds after being released from control of the 10th Armored and returned to the Division. Colonel Hagerty's biggest problem was keeping his regiment within supporting distance of the rapidly moving spearheads. The roads were clogged with traffic and most of his transportation had been diverted to other elements. Until the 19th the regiment remained in Hermeskeil, then it moved to Birkenfeld. It pushed to Baumholder on the 20th and almost immediately continued to Wolfstein. In this vicinity, enemy forces bypassed by the spearheads had begun to converge and Colonel Hagerty's men were given the mission of clearing the area. This assignment occupied the regiment until late in the afternoon of the 21st when it was again ordered forward. The following morning, the 301st reached its assembly area at Weisenheim-am-Berg to complete the forward deployment of the 94th Division.

The men of the 94th had celebrated St. Patrick's Day of 1945 by driving eastward fourteen miles and presenting their Division Commander with seven hundred more prisoners of war. From the 18th of March until the 21st, they continued their wild dash without halt or respite. Advances of twenty and more miles in a single day became the norm. On the 18th, 19th and 20th, the daily toll of PWs ran between three thousand and thirty-five hundred troops. On the 19th, the 94th Reconnaissance Troop alone accounted for one thousand Supermen in addition to capturing fifteen towns. These headlong onslaughts of the motorized spearheads had continued on the 21st until the Rhine was reached. As General Eisenhower anticipated, there was "another big bag of prisoners."

During the last days of the advance to the Rhine, the Germans sent over some aircraft to strafe and harass the advancing columns, in an attempt to slow the plunging spearheads. Just beyond Carlsberg, as the 1st Battalion, 376th, was passing through a narrow defile, it was attacked by several ME-262s, the enemy's super-fast, jet-propelled fighters, and two slower twin-engine ships. The jets escaped unharmed, but Battery D of the 465th AAA Battalion scored hits on the twin-





Near Grundstadt, ME-262s (German jet-propelled planes) strafe and bomb elements of the 12th Armored Division in the zone of the 94th, setting fire to several ammunition vehicles

motored planes. From time to time during the following days, enemy aerial formations numbering as high as fifteen planes would appear suddenly for lightning-like strikes. For the most part, the antiaircraft gunners were able to keep these fighters and light bombers at bay.

During the entire pursuit, the Division artillery experienced unusual difficulties. Because of the speed of the advance, it was necessary to keep reconnaissance parties with the leading infantry elements at all times and as often as not, the artillery battalions were absolutely without infantry protection. Battery B of the 301st Field Artillery was even forced to pull off the road on one occasion, to repulse an enemy counterattack. Batteries often moved as many as four times a day and each stop meant that new positions had to be prepared. Reconnaissance parties from the 390th Field Artillery captured twenty-seven prisoners at one time and twenty-one more on a second occasion. Another day, two batteries of this battalion took a wrong turn and found themselves in a fire fight which resulted in the capture of Kirkenfallenbach along with the two hundred Germans defending the town. There was no ammunition train for the artillery battalions, as the trucks normally used for this purpose were hauling infantry units. This meant that the batteries had available only those rounds carried on the prime movers. Luckily, fire missions requested were few and far between. Forward observers were rendered practically useless by the speed of the advance and visual reconnaissance was conducted primarily from liaison planes.

The speed of the pursuit was achieved by pressing into service every available vehicle and loading it to the utmost. Columns including 2½-ton trucks (borrowed for the infantry from within the division or made available from corps quartermaster truck companies), jeeps, tanks, TDs, half-tracks, captured enemy vehicles and motorcycles. Every mobile vehicle moved east as fast as it could travel.

Throughout the race to the Rhine, fuel supply was a critical problem. It was solved by quartermaster truck companies which hauled forward gas, lubricants and spare parts and returned loaded with PWs. Food was never lacking, for the forward elements lived as much off the land as they did on the C and K rations that were trucked to them.

Traffic control along the routes eastward also presented tremendous difficulties. For the most part the road net was poor and choked with armor, motorized infantry and supply convoys. By way of example, elements of five infantry and five armored divisions, plus numerous corps and army troops, converged on the city of Grunstadt within a 48-hour period. Gradually, however, higher headquarters brought order out of the chaos.

## Chapter 41: LUDWIGSHAFEN

LUDWIGSHAFEN, with a prewar population of approximately 145,000, was the prize of the Saar Palatinate and the home of Germany's greatest chemical plant, *I. G. Farben Industriem*. It had originally been assigned as the objective of the Seventh Army, but when its advance was slowed by stubborn German resistance and the units to the north of XX Corps made rapid gains, there was a general southward shift of all objectives. This turn of events placed Ludwigshafen in the path of the 94th.

Following the reduction of the enemy roadblocks in the vicinity of Enkenbach on the 20th, those elements of the 12th Armored Division in the zone of the 94th raced forward, attempting to seize Ludwigshafen by the same headlong tactic that had won city after city in the drive to the east. But on the outskirts of Ludwigshafen the assault stopped dead. The city had been ringed with the antiaircraft guns of the 9th Flak Division which protected it from the fleets of Allied bombers that daily swept the skies over Germany. These guns were depressed to zero elevation and employed as direct-fire weapons, as the flak division prepared to fight as infantry. Into the city had drifted the remnants of many battered German divisions, adding to the strength of the fanatical defenders already present. Unknown to the advancing American troops was the fact that the German high command had issued orders for the city to be defended to the last man.

During the afternoon of the 21st, the 376th received orders moving its zone southward, and the 1st Battalion started toward Ludwigshafen. Under the impression that the armor had taken the city, Major Miller's men advanced to outpost the Rhine along the eastern edge of the city. Expecting to encounter only small delaying forces bypassed by the armor, the bone-weary men of Company A moved out of Oppau. It was a clear moonlit night and the column advanced rapidly. The lead scouts encountered two large lakes and started around the east bank of the one nearest the Rhine. The 3d Platoon, which was acting as advance guard, had rounded the lake and was heading for Friesenheim when it was engaged by machine-gun fire from the vicinity of a line of eleven burnt-out halftracks of the 12th Armored Division. Other enemy automatic weapons added their fire and it was only after Staff Sergeant W. F. Pillow's machine-gun section had worked forward and gone into action that the leading elements were able to disengage themselves. Meanwhile, battalion had moved into Oggersheim to the southwest.

Staff Sergeant Michael Dripchak and his squad then were sent forward on reconnaissance. They returned to report the enemy was dig-



ging positions in the outskirts of the city at every point probed by the patrol. At 2300 hours Company C dispatched Staff Sergeant Robert E. Trefzger's squad of the 3d Platoon to Friesenheim. This patrol was to infiltrate into town, then send back two guides to bring forward the rest of the company. The squad slipped across the level, open ground west of Friesenheim and repeatedly attempted to infiltrate the enemy lines. Each effort was stopped by fire. Three hours later the patrol returned to report its failure. Staff Sergeant Donald J. Gary's squad was immediately sent forward with the same mission. This third patrol encountered a launching track for radio-controlled V-1s, and was brought under fire by enemy positions around the installation. With no better results, the squad pulled back and made other attempts along the enemy line. Following this, the patrol rejoined the rest of the platoon in the vicinity of the lake and the unit withdrew to Oggersheim.

To the north, in the zone of the 302d Infantry, there was patrol activity of another sort during the early hours of the 22d. At about 0200 hours, an enemy party crossed the Rhine in rubber boats in the vicinity of Bobenheim, and landed in Company C's sector. The enemy group then split, moving against the strongpoint which had been established around a frozen-foods factory. One segment of the German patrol opened fire with *Panzerfausts* and machine pistols on a small stone building occupied by part of the light-machine-gun section. A second element of the German force worked along a shallow, muddy ditch toward the company command post and the positions of the mortar section. With the discovery that there was an enemy patrol in the area, a reserve squad was ordered to search the rear of the position. As this group moved out it was engaged by an enemy automatic weapon. In the CP, almost simultaneous with this burst of fire, there was a low whistle over the sound-powered telephone connected with the mortar position. At the far end of the line, Private First Class Junior R. Vanderpool whispered: "Don't get me wrong, I'm not scared but could you please send me a couple of riflemen? There's a Kraut about thirty yards to my front shooting at me with a machine gun." The desired support was dispatched and after a short fire fight, the enemy withdrew to the river and recrossed, abandoning their casualties.

During the night, the 1st Battalion, 376th, moved into Oggersheim and laid plans for a coordinated attack against Friesenheim. Sergeant Levi W. Albair of Company C led another patrol at 0700 hours to



*The I. G. Farben plant at Ludwigshafen*

further probe the enemy defenses in an attempt to locate some of their close-support weapons. The route chosen was along the railroad tracks leading into Ludwigshafen. Moving cautiously, the small group advanced about one thousand yards before being brought under fire. One man was killed and the party withdrew.

At 1230 hours on the 22d, the attack on Friesenheim was launched with Company A on the left and Company C on the right. As it had been reported there were stores of poison gas in the I. G. Farben plant in Ludwigshafen, gas masks were carried. The troops moved forward, only to be met almost immediately by a hail of enemy fire. Lieutenant Thomas D. Huthnance, of Company C, and Staff Sergeant Thomas C. Wilson, of Company A, worked their men to the right of the attack and managed to secure a few houses in the southwest corner of town. Other elements of the attacking force pushed to the left but were stopped in the open and unable to continue the advance. Enemy mortars and artillery rained upon them, inflicting heavy casualties. The troops attempted to dig in, but hit water a scant eight inches below the surface of the ground. Private First Class Emanuel Wicentowsky took charge of the small force and hastily organized another assault. Using marching fire, they advanced in the face of the enemy weapons and gained the edge of Friesenheim. Just at this time, American artillery fire crashed on the position forcing them back into the open where they remained until after dark.

In the meantime, the group that had entered the southwest corner of town began working north. Enemy 88mm and 20mm fire was in-

tense and progress slow, but seven houses and sixty-four prisoners were taken before the assault was stalled by German defensive fires. American mortars and artillery worked on the enemy positions within the town unceasingly; at 1400 hours the 2d Platoon of Company A and the 3d Platoon of Company C jumped off in a continuation of the attack. They assaulted the buildings from which the first wave had received so much fire and after a bitter struggle won the position. From house to house the advance continued. To assist the infantry, five medium tanks of the 12th Armored Division came forward and in short order, the 88s and tankers were engaged in private duels. As soon as an enemy antitank gun would reveal its position by engaging one of the armored vehicles, an artillery concentration was placed on the gun position. By darkness, several blocks in Friesenheim had been cleared by these infantry-artillery-tank tactics. Plans were then laid for a continuation of the attack in the morning and a perimeter defense established for the night.

During the afternoon, the right flank of the battalion had been protected by the 3d Platoon of Company B, which had moved along the railroad tracks to assume the required positions. Throughout this action Company B was aware of the volume of fire being directed against the attacking companies, but was unable to locate accurately any of the German pieces responsible for it. Hence, Staff Sergeant Edward W. Rose and his squad moved from cover for the express purpose of drawing fire. In this manner the squad located several enemy guns, of which three were destroyed by artillery fire.

On the afternoon of the 22d, Division Headquarters received orders to clear Ludwigshafen with all possible speed. A task force consisting of the 376th Infantry; CCA of the 12th Armored Division; Company B, 774th TD Battalion; Battery D of the 465th AAA Battalion; and Company B (less one platoon), 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion was organized and placed under the command of General Cheadle, Assistant Division Commander. At about the same time, the 12th Armored Division less CCA, and the 10th Armored Division were ordered to move south and gain contact with the Seventh Army.

It was apparent by this time that the fight for Ludwigshafen was going to be a bloody affair. General Malony called Colonel Hagerty forward, then sent him to confer with the task force commander and Lieutenant Colonel Anderson of the 376th in regard to possible commitment of elements of the 301st Infantry in the battle for the city.

During the early hours of the 22d, the 2d Battalion, 376th, moved



*Dual-purpose 88*

out of Oggersheim against Maudach, a town approximately 3,500 yards to the south. Company E, supported by one HMG section, reached the outskirts of the city at about 0200 hours where it overcame a lone German outpost. There was no further opposition and two and a half hours later the troops had finished a hasty search of Maudach. The battalion reorganized and laid plans for a continuation of the advance. At 1100 hours, Companies F and G moved against Rheingonheim and Hochfeld-Mundenheim.

With the 1st and 2d Platoons abreast, Company F advanced against Rheingonheim. Just short of the objective, the 1st Platoon, on the east of the road, encountered rifle and automatic-weapons fire which halted its advance. By employing marching fire, the 2d Platoon was able to forge forward, securing several houses in the southwest part of the city. Then the 1st Platoon side-slipped to the left and entered Rheingonheim. As the assault resumed, resistance stiffened. Toward the center of town the reserve platoon was committed and the company

pushed north. Late in the afternoon it became necessary to commit Company E to assist in clearing the last enemy resistance from the northwest corner of the city.

In Hochfeld, Company G encountered bitter opposition all through the day, as this city was one of the key points in the defenses of Ludwigshafen. It secured a toe-hold in the southwest corner of town but was unable to expand this. At dark the company established a perimeter defense.

During the night, Lieutenant Walter E. Hostetler and an eight-man patrol moved forward to destroy an 88mm gun located approximately one thousand yards behind the enemy lines; this weapon covered the highway leading into Mundenheim. After several attempts to infiltrate the enemy lines had failed, Private First Class Brooks A. Mosblech approached an enemy outpost and succeeded in talking the two Germans manning it into surrendering. Taking one of the POWs with him, Mosblech moved forward to repeat the process. There were sounds of a scuffle in the darkness and, as the rest of the patrol rushed to the assistance of its surrender emissary, it was met with heavy small-arms fire. Two of the group were seriously wounded and the patrol withdrew, carrying off its casualties.

The 3d Battalion, 376th, moved into Oggersheim around noon of the 22d and Lieutenant Colonel Thurston immediately proceeded to Maudach to contact the 2d Battalion. Orders called for the 3d Battalion to attack the following morning and seize the factory area northeast of Rheingonheim. Once this area had been cleared, Lieutenant Colonel Thurston's men were to push north against Mundenheim. At the same time the 2d Battalion, 376th, would attack eastward from Hochfeld while, to the north, the 1st Battalion, 376th, would press the attack against Friesenheim.

From the west, at 0530 hours on the 23d, Company E of the 376th moved against Mundenheim. The company was subjected to accurate artillery concentrations and the direct fire of well emplaced 88mm guns. Casualties in the 1st and 2d Platoons were extremely heavy and in a short time both units were down to half strength. As the 3d Platoon was committed on the left along the railroad tracks connecting Hochfeld and Mundenheim, an enemy artillery shell hit one of the boxcars on the tracks. Within a few seconds, eight carloads of artillery ammunition were filling the air with jagged fragments of steel. When the ammunition had exhausted itself, Technical Sergeant Anthony S. Rao's 3d Platoon flanked the opposition delaying the rest

of the company. The advance into Mundenheim continued with over two hundred prisoners being taken.

Company I led the 3d Battalion's attack at 0700 hours against the factory area below Mundenheim. Commanded by Lieutenant Bernard B. Cohen, the 3d Platoon encountered stiff automatic-weapons fire which it overwhelmed in a bold assault employing marching fire. Then, the entire company pushed into the factory area, while under heavy artillery fire from across the river, and rounded up several hundred civilians.

At 0900 hours the entire battalion moved against Mundenheim from the south. The attack of Company E earlier in the morning had eliminated resistance west of the main road between Rheingonheim and Mundenheim, but the enemy defenses south of the latter town were still intact. Supported by tanks of CCA of 12th Armored Division and with American artillery and mortars raining on the enemy positions, the attack met little resistance. By 1100 hours all three rifle companies were in the outskirts of town and pushing toward the center of Mundenheim, along with the men of the 2d Battalion. The town was in American hands at 1400 hours. Preparations for the continuation of the attack into Ludwigshafen were made at once.

Companies K and L made slow progress against the positions to their front, while Company I, advancing in the zone next to the river, moved into Ludwigshafen without a great deal of opposition. Soon the right assault company was far in advance of the battalion, receiving enemy fire from three sides. It forged ahead slowly during the afternoon and had reached a carbarn within the city when ordered to stand fast until the rest of the battalion came abreast.

All through the day, enemy artillery fire in the area as far west as Oggersheim was extremely accurate. Again and again, concentrations landed at the right spot at exactly the right time. There were German civilians everywhere and without a doubt some of them were acting as observers for the enemy guns across the Rhine. During the operation, the *Luftwaffe* was also active. The 465th AAA Battalion had a busy time keeping the German planes at bay.

At 0705 hours on the 23d, with all three companies abreast, the 1st Battalion, 376th, attacked to clear Friesenheim. Companies B and C advanced rapidly against occasional sniper and artillery fire. Throughout the day, Company A on the south received automatic and 20mm gun fire from its right flank. While attempting to locate the enemy gun positions responsible for this fire, Technical Sergeant Leon D.

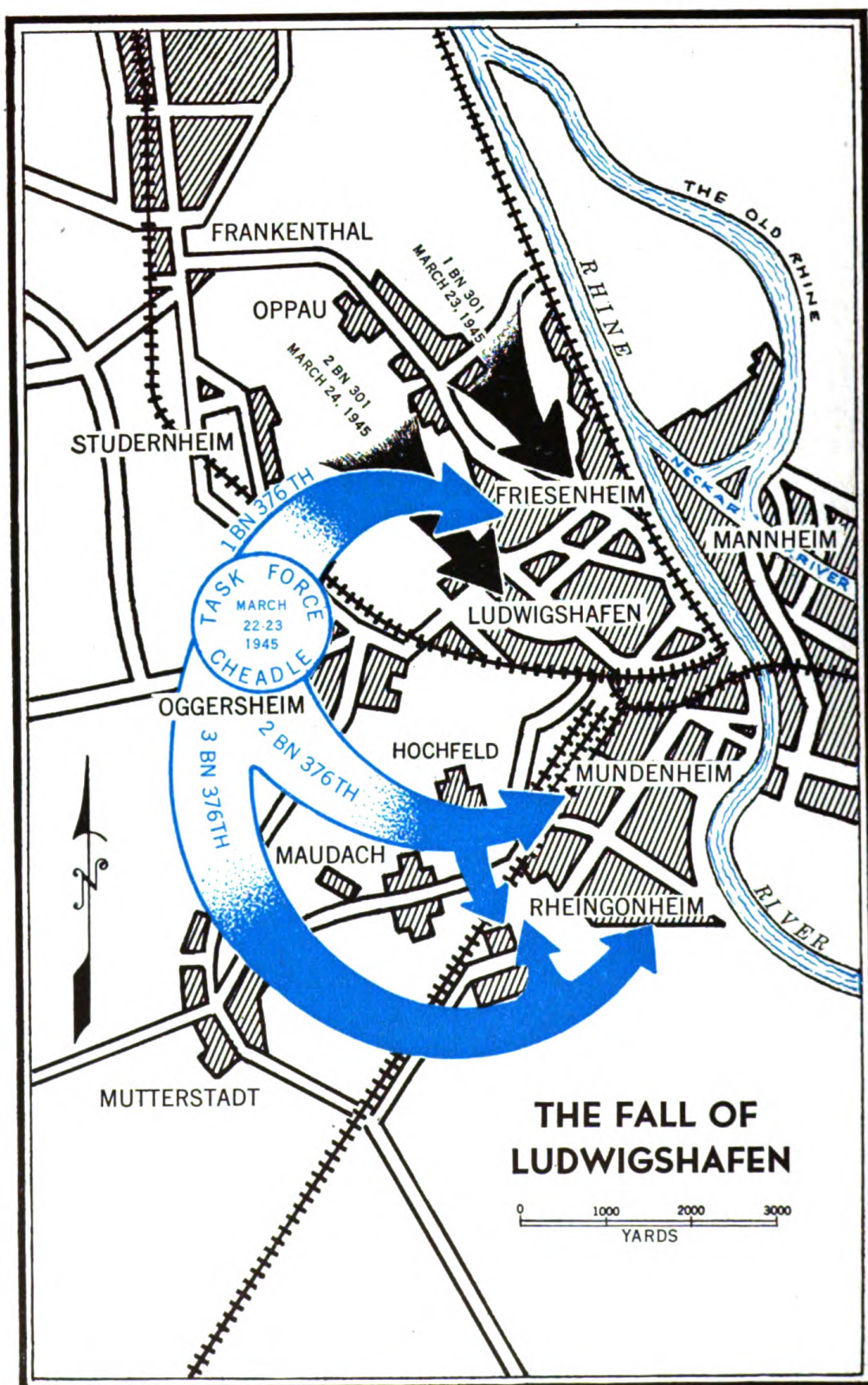


Crutchfield was hit and mortally wounded. A tank was brought forward about this time and with its assistance the advance was speeded materially.

Because of the immense size of Ludwigshafen and its suburbs, General Malony decided to commit the 301st Infantry to hasten the fall of the city. Consequently, Task Force Cheadle was dissolved at 1800 hours on the 23d and Division assumed control of the operation from a forward CP at Oggersheim. The city was split into a northern and southern zone of action, with the dividing line running along the railroad tracks which bisected Ludwigshafen. In the southern sector, the 376th Infantry was to continue the attack while the 301st, less the 3d Battalion, which was on alert for a special SHAEF guard mission and consequently not available for the fighting, assumed control in the north. Both regiments were ordered to push toward the center of the city and complete its reduction and occupation with all possible speed. During the change of sectors, and prior to his relief by the 301st Infantry, Major Miller was placed in charge of the northern sector.

The 1st Battalion, 301st, moved from Leistadt to Oppau on the afternoon of the 23d and the battalion commander immediately proceeded to Oggersheim for his orders. After contacting General Cheadle and Colonel Hagerty, the CO of the 1st Battalion returned to Oppau; at 1815 hours the battalion passed through the lines of the 3d Battalion, 302d, to attack south. Company C, on the battalion left, moved along the river while Companies B and A were abreast, to the right, in that order. All three units had a section of HMGs attached with the remaining section given the mission of protecting the battalion CP. The 81s were left in the zone of the 3d Battalion, 302d, under orders to fire only on definitely located targets.

Through a maze of factories and warehouses, the battalion pushed forward against light resistance. With the coming of darkness, control became extremely difficult. Due to the mass of structural metal within the city, radios were of little help. Contact was maintained by patrols which repeatedly became lost in the vast, bombed-out area. There were few landmarks and the factories were of such size, in some cases, that whole companies could have been employed in the search of a single installation. In addition, the area was interwoven with pillboxes, bunkers, strongpoints and gun positions. Company C encountered one such strongpoint about 2100 hours and caught the Germans coming out of a bunker to man their positions. Twenty-five prisoners were





*Patrolling was both difficult and dangerous in the bombed-out city*

captured along with several double-barreled machine guns which were destroyed.

Company C, on the left of the battalion, pushed ahead of the other two assault companies and was ordered to halt until Companies A and B came abreast. In the center of the battalion, Company B encountered as much resistance from the darkness and rubble-filled streets as from the enemy. Contact between adjacent platoons and companies became almost impossible. During the night the 2d Platoon lost contact completely and patrols sent out to locate other elements of the company did not return until the following day. One patrol, led by Private First Class Harry C. Hamilton, started from Company B to Company A about 0200 hours. After a sharp fire fight with a heavily armed enemy group it made the desired contact. Then both units tied in and waited for dawn. On the right of the battalion, Company A had encountered about the same type of resistance in its advance.

All through the night, the sound of motorboats could be heard from the direction of the river. With the outer defenses of Ludwigshafen breached and its complete capture only a matter of time, it was obvious

the enemy was attempting to evacuate as many troops as possible from the besieged city. The defend-to-the-death orders had been countermanded.

At 0600 hours the 1st Battalion resumed its advance, as the last of the enemy opposition began to crumble. Assault companies surged forward all along the line. By 0820 hours, Lieutenant Colonel Hodges' men reached the railroad tracks and made contact with the 376th Infantry shortly thereafter. Without incident the I. G. Farben plant was cleared and the troops began hunting snipers. Civilians milling in the streets presented a considerable problem, and enemy artillery fire continued to fall in the area from Mannheim, directly across the river. It was at this time that the rumors, which had repeatedly swept through the forces fighting in the city, concerning a six lane tunnel under the Rhine connecting Ludwigshafen with Mannheim, reportedly bigger and better than the Holland Tunnel between New Jersey and New York, were exploded.

The 2d Battalion, 301st, had arrived in Oggersheim at 1500 hours on the 23d. At 0145 hours the following morning, Lieutenant Colonel Brumley's men passed through the 1st Battalion, 376th, with Company E on the left, Company G in the center and Company F on the right. Company E moved past a hospital and across an open park, taking a large bunker which was found to contain 1,800 civilians. The 2d Battalion was charged with making contact with the 1st Battalion, 301st, whose exact whereabouts were unknown. In the gutted ruins and hills of rubble within the city, whole streets had disappeared and pinpointing a location was extremely difficult in the day time, while impossible at night. Hence, the required contact was not made until 0700 hours. One hour later, the leading elements of the battalion closed on the railroad tracks. A patrol under Technical Sergeant Elbert R. Freeman continued forward. It soon established contact with Company F of the 376th Infantry.

The 2d Battalion, 376th, reported that it had been held up about dusk the evening before by heavy fire in the southern edge of Ludwigshafen. The companies, which had become widely scattered in clearing the city, established perimeter defenses, then settled down for the night. Since the whereabouts of the other companies of the battalion were unknown, the CO of Company F issued orders to fire only in self defense. Patrols managed to contact Company E on the right eventually, but Company G still farther to the right could not be located. Thus the night passed. At dawn, other patrols were sent forward. They

reported the enemy had withdrawn. Immediately, the advance was resumed.

The 3d Battalion, 376th, spent the night of the 23d in the southeastern corner of Ludwigshafen. Patrols to the front constantly encountered roadblocks and the engineers were called upon to clear these obstacles while civilians were put to work moving rubble from the streets. At 0630 hours the battalion jumped off again with the leading platoon of each company mounted on tanks. Companies K and L encountered only light resistance and a patrol from Company L under Staff Sergeant John R. Milroy made contact with the 1st Battalion 301st, on the far side of the tracks. Company I had a more difficult time, being delayed by roadblocks.

After being passed through by the 2d Battalion, 301st, the 1st Battalion, 376th, moved to Oggersheim where it closed at 0405 hours on the 24th. After a short rest the troops were moved to Mundenheim, but by this time Ludwigshafen had fallen.

Most of the units within the city spent the day of the 24th hunting snipers and mopping up bypassed groups of fanatics who refused to surrender. Throughout the area, it was later discovered, many German soldiers had donned civilian clothing to avoid capture. So great was the population of this vast industrial area, and so few the available CIC personnel, it proved impossible to check all civilians. Only suspicious characters were picked up for questioning. To prevent *Wehrmacht* deserters from causing trouble or committing acts of sabotage, dismounted, motorized and armored patrols constantly roamed the streets, adhering to no fixed schedule.

Meanwhile, units of the Seventh Army had been streaming toward the Rhine all during the fighting in Ludwigshafen. One motor column of the 100th Division, stopped at Oggersheim by personnel of the 94th on the 23d, explained that they were en route to Ludwigshafen. The column commander was exceedingly surprised to learn that the city had not yet fallen. Certain motorized elements of the 3d Division also had to be halted when they were about to run afoul of a nest of 88s.

A message received from General Walker, the corps commander, called the capture of Ludwigshafen "a fitting climax to the spectacular drive of the division." During the twelve days, March 13-24, 1945, the 94th Infantry Division with its attachments broke through the enemy lines east of the Saar River, overran all hostile resistance and





*Hunting snipers in Ludwigshafen*



actually spearheaded the advance of several American divisions over one hundred miles of German soil to the Rhine River. During this drive large amounts of enemy supplies and matériel were captured or destroyed. Elements of eighteen separate German divisions were encountered and the men of the 94th assisted materially in the annihilation of more than a few of these units. The Division took over two hundred towns and with the assistance of CCA of the 12th Armored Division captured the key city of Ludwigshafen. During this same period, 13,434 German prisoners of war were captured.

During the action in Ludwigshafen, the 302d Infantry improved its defensive positions to the north. The troops rested and reconditioned their equipment in preparation for whatever might lie ahead. Orders were not long in coming. The 94th was in the zone of the Seventh Army and on the 24th movement to the rear began.

The 3d Battalion, 301st, which had moved to regimental reserve at Oppau was no longer under SHAEF alert, its guard mission never having materialized. At 1300 hours on the 24th, this battalion left for Weisenheim-am-Berg and an hour and a half later was in its assigned assembly area. After being relieved by elements of CCA of the 12th Armored Division, the 2d Battalion, 301st, moved next. It assembled at Bobenheim-am-Berg at 1635 hours while the remaining battalion of Colonel Hagerty's regiment closed at Leistadt at 1900 hours.

The 376th Infantry followed, with its 1st Battalion, which was in reserve, closing at Lambsheim by 1830 hours. After being relieved by elements of the 399th Infantry of the 100th Infantry, the 2d Battalion arrived at Maxdorf at 1930 hours and at 2030 hours, the 3d Battalion reached Ruchheim.

The 15th Infantry of the 3d Division relieved the 302d, under the cover of darkness which slowed the operation considerably. By 0130 hours on the 25th, the last elements had been relieved and for the first time since January 7 the 94th Infantry Division was out of contact with the enemy.

Division Headquarters was already hard at work on plans for the movement of the Division to a rest area and on the afternoon of the 24th, quartering parties left for Baumholder which the 94th had captured a week earlier. Movement of the 94th itself was complicated by the fact that many divisions, separate battalions and miscellaneous units were moving through the rear areas. Among the first of the above was the 80th Infantry Division, which had been on the right

flank of the 94th for most of the drive to the Rhine. It was now rolling north behind General Malony's men. Also, endless convoys of bridging equipment were cluttering the roads, moving from the west toward the river in preparation for the crossing of Seventh Army. Supply columns, too, added to the density of traffic as they brought up food, ammunition, gasoline, and myriad items needed all along the front and in Third Army's bridgehead in the vicinity of Mainz. Through this criss-crossing traffic, the 94th had to move west after carefully coordinating with every unit moving between Ludwigshafen and Baumholder. These complicated arrangements were made and departures were scheduled to begin on the 25th with the Military Police Platoon in charge of route marking and traffic control.

With the coming of the 25th, the motor columns of the Division started westward with all antiaircraft guns manned and crews on the alert. As the convoys rolled back from the Rhine, they met an ever-increasing flow of traffic headed toward the river. For the men of the 94th all tension was gone and life assumed a more even tempo. There was time to enjoy the German countryside. It was quiet and peaceful, and the country people scarcely raised their heads to watch the endless lines of vehicles that streamed over the traffic-choked roads. Spring had come and the farmers were preparing their fields for new crops. Only signs of war were the shattered wreckage of enemy convoys which were occasionally encountered in the ditches along the roads.

Since a large part of the rest area assigned to the Division proved to be an old German range, the quartering parties had moved beyond the assigned zone to obtain suitable billets. The main columns of the 94th began rolling into Baumholder about noon. Division artillery closed in its area at 1330 hours. The Division command group followed and the new CP opened at 1545 hours. Special Units located in the vicinity of Baumholder, while the artillery and infantry battalions were situated in the surrounding towns. The 301st Infantry went to Kirchbollenbach where it closed at 1730 hours. By 2100 hours the 302d arrived in Enzweiler, and the 376th, which was bringing up the rear, closed at 0545 hours on the 26th in the vicinity of Heimbach.

PART SEVEN

GERMANY: OCCUPATION

*I congratulate you on the record you have established. The road to victory has been considerably shortened by your proven fighting capabilities and the will to win.*

MAJOR GENERAL HARRY J. MALONY



## Chapter 42: KREFELD

**B**AUMHOLDER, and the surrounding towns and villages in which the troops of the 94th were billeted, lay in the midst of the rolling, wooded countryside of the Saar Palatinate. It was a pleasant location and the land was budding in the warmth of early spring. After weeks and months of bitter fighting, the men of the Division fully enjoyed the peace and quiet.

The main and alternate supply routes which ran through the area were choked with traffic; motor columns moved eastward continually. There were personnel carriers loaded with infantry reinforcements; column after column of tanks, tank destroyers and antiaircraft units; artillery battalions of all caliber; engineer heavy ponton outfits; and endless numbers of quartermaster vehicles bringing up food, ammunition and fuel. Every conceivable type of unit below army level was on the move. Against this stream of traffic long lines of "cattle cars" jammed and overflowing with prisoners of war moved to the rear.

From the time of their arrival on the 25th and 26th, the men of the Division found ample opportunity for rest and relaxation despite the myriad pressing tasks which confronted them. Vehicles, weapons, equipment and clothing had to be cleaned, overhauled and repaired or replaced. However, there was no frenzied rush and work was accomplished at a leisurely pace. Command posts were quickly caught in a flood of long postponed paperwork. There were recommendations for awards and promotions to be written, investigations to be conducted, after-action reports to be compiled, new equipment to be requisitioned, pass quotas to be filled, reports to be submitted and a thousand and one administrative details to be put in order.

From the front the news was better each day. German cities that had seemed long-range goals a month ago, fell or were threatened by Allied onslaughts all along the Western Front. The grapevine was of the opinion that the next employment of the Division would be in exploiting XX Corps' breakthrough in the vicinity of Frankfurt, but on the 28th a terse warning order shattered this myth: "Units will be prepared to move 291800 by motor and rail approximately 175 miles north to engage in further operations with the enemy." This was the forerunner of assignment to the newly activated XXII Corps, then attached to Fifteenth Army.

In appreciation of the superior fighting qualities displayed by the 94th during its tour of duty with the Third Army, the following day, General Patton forwarded to the Division the letter reproduced on the following page.

HEADQUARTERS  
Third United States Army  
Office of the Commanding General  
APO 403

29 March 1945

My dear General Malony:

Please accept for yourself and extend to the officers and men of your Command the sincere appreciation of all other members of the Third Army for the splendid work your Division has accomplished during its tour of duty with us.

We appreciate what you have done, and we are sure that in your next assignment you will be equally successful.

Most sincerely,

*G. S. PATTON, Jr.*  
Lieut. General, U.S. Army  
Commanding

Major General Harry J. Malony  
Headquarters 94th Infantry Division  
APO 94  
U.S. Army

1st Ind.

AG 201.22 (29Mar45) CG  
HQ 94 INF DIV APO 94 US ARMY 29 Mar 45.  
TO: All Members of the 94th Division and Attached Units.

In accordance with the wishes of the Army Commander I take pleasure in publishing this commendation to the officers and men of this Command.

*HARRY J. MALONY*  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commanding



Plans were coordinated with Third Army Headquarters and Division issued orders for the motor and rail movement, naming as final destination the area surrounding Krefeld, Germany. This city, situated almost on the west bank of the Rhine opposite the Rhur, had been the hub of American occupational activities after World War I. Advance parties left for the new area on March 30. The bulk of the troops was to move by six railroad trains from the French border town of Bouzonville to Willich, Germany. Organic vehicles of the Division and their assigned personnel would move by motor.

During the latter days of March, the First and Ninth Armies had broken out of their Rhine bridgeheads at Remagen and Wesel and their spearheads had joined at Lippstadt, completely surrounding Field Marshal Walther Model's Army Group B and elements of Army Group H. The enemy-held area within the American cordon formed a huge rectangle, bounded on the west by the Rhine between Duisburg and Bonn and extending eastward to Paderborn and Siefen. The formidable size of the trapped German forces required the shifting of all First and Ninth Army troops east of the river that continuous pressure might be exerted against the perimeter of the pocket. Correspondingly, there arose a demand for such troops as could be spared from the other armies and the task of maintaining the west bank of the Rhine opposite the pocket was given to Major General Ernest N. Harmon's XXII Corps of the newly formed Fifteenth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Leonard T. Gerow. To this corps the 94th Division was assigned along with several airborne units.

The motor columns of the Division moved from Baumholder to Saarlautern and then to Thionville. They crossed Luxembourg, which seemed untouched by the war, entered Belgium and made an overnight stop at Arlon. On the second day the journey was resumed through the Bulge area where burnt and disabled tanks, both American and German, were a frequent sight. As the columns passed through Liège they were welcomed enthusiastically. Aachen, on the German border, was still littered with rubble and those few buildings which had survived the battle for the city were empty shells of tottering masonry. The march serials crossed the Roer and rolled forward across the flat Cologne Plain. Near Hüls, numerous antiaircraft positions were observed, and an occasional burned-out vehicle on which the last traces of white stars could be seen. Finally the end of the trek was in sight. All through the afternoon of the 1st of April, Easter Sunday, march units closed in their assigned areas.

Meanwhile, the foot elements of the Division had moved to Bouzon-

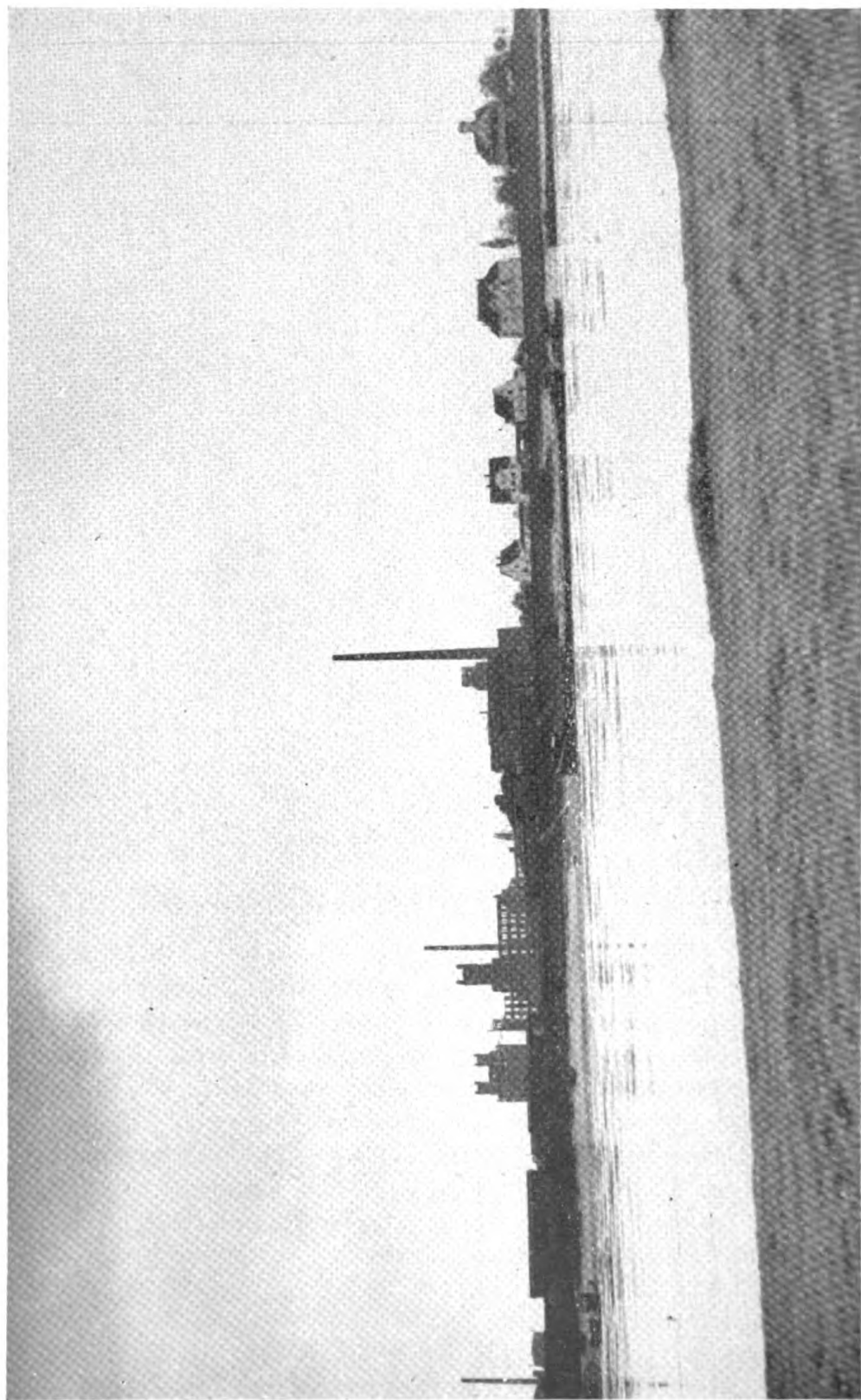




*"... and what's more, this whole damned area is verboten!"*

ville, on the French border, by truck and there boarded 40-and-8s for the remainder of the journey. Their movement was uneventful; from the 1st to the 3d of April trains arrived and troops detrained at Willich, five miles from Krefeld. Immediately, the infantry elements moved to effect the relief of the 102d Infantry Division. This was completed on the 3d; the 94th was back in business.

Colonel Hagerty's regiment and Colonel Johnson's took over the Division's new front line positions while the 376th was assigned a purely occupational mission to their rear. To the 94th Reconnaissance Troop went the task of patrolling the Division rear area. A dual mission was given the 465th AAA Battalion: fighting and governing. Since the German-Dutch border lay to the west of the Division area and adjacent to it, the 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment, Dutch Limburg



*Looking westward, back across the Rhine, from Mündelheim*

Army was attached to General Malony's command to coordinate border patrol and trans-border travel.

Along the Rhine, the 301st and 302d Infantry Regiments were in position and anxious to learn all they could about the enemy across the river. The 102d Division had informed the relieving regiments they were facing the 183d and 176th Volksgrenadier Divisions. These units had been reorganized time and again; their personnel consisted of about eighty per cent combat veterans among whom were interspersed convalescents and recruits.

To gain further information of the enemy, the 1st Battalion, 302d, ordered a ten-man patrol sent to the east bank of the Rhine during the night following the relief. For this mission one officer and nine enlisted men of Company B were carefully selected. Through the engineers, small rubber assault boats were obtained and during the afternoon practice operations were held on a lake in rear of the battalion area. At this time, belt-type life preservers were issued.

As darkness descended it began to rain. The night proved extremely black, the force of the rain increased and there was a good deal of thunder and lightning. For the operation at hand it was an ideal night. At about 2230 hours, the ten-man patrol started for the Rhine accompanied by a detail which hauled the assault craft to the river. The patrol encountered and breached four separate bands of barbed wire. On the river bank, the boats were lashed together with short lengths of rope to prevent their being separated by the current while crossing. Then as the carrying party watched and listened, the patrol pushed off into the darkness and crossed without incident.

On the far shore, three men were left under the command of Sergeant Claude K. Harvey to guard the boats and protect the crossing site. Before the patrol leader took the rest of the party forward, Sergeant Harvey was instructed to remain in wait until 0445 hours. If the patrol proper had not returned by that time, the security detachment was to withdraw. Subsequent to the departure of the lieutenant and his five men hostile small-arms fire was heard from the direction in which they had gone. Following this, the security detachment heard the movement of German sentries and an occasional phrase in German from the bluffs near the river. At about 0300 hours several mortar shells fell in the vicinity and there were screams for help from the man or men who had been wounded. Then all was quiet.

At 0445 hours the patrol still had failed to return, so the security detachment moved back to the river only to discover that their boats had drifted into positions from which it would be impossible to move

them before daylight. Hence, it was decided to attempt infiltrating the enemy lines in an effort to gain contact with the American forces attacking the Ruhr Pocket on the east of the river. Enemy machine-gun fire prevented the execution of this plan and the four men took shelter on one of the barges along the river bank. With the coming of daylight, German troops were observed within one hundred yards of this hiding place. Throughout the day the party remained in observation and located two camouflaged bunkers about one hundred feet from the river bank. American artillery shelled the area repeatedly and most of the superstructure of the steel barge being used as a hiding place was blown away. However, each time the shelling started the Americans retreated below decks, thus escaping injury. This same fire completely destroyed the rubber assault boats.

With the boats gone, the only method of escape was to swim the river. After judging the distance and the current, Sergeant Harvey alone considered himself a strong enough swimmer to make the far shore four hundred yards away. At 2330 hours, the NCO lowered himself into the icy waters and started for the west bank. Several shots were fired at him but all went wide of their mark. After an hour and forty minutes of battling the current and the numbing effects of the water, Sergeant Harvey reached his objective. Utterly exhausted the NCO lay on the river bank for more than an hour before he gained sufficient strength to stand up and walk. In the early hours of the morning, he made contact with troops of the 2d Battalion, 302d, and was rushed to regimental headquarters. From there the NCO was taken to the division CP for interrogation as to the fate of the patrol and an account of the enemy installations observed. Later, from forward OPs near the river, Sergeant Harvey accurately located the barge where he had left the other three men of the security detachment. Division artillery excluded this boat and the surrounding area from its targets. Several other patrols were sent across the Rhine in an effort to rescue survivors, but all in vain.

Eleven days after the first patrol had taken off across the river, five other members of the original party managed to steal a German boat and make their way back to the Division. During their stay in German territory these men had subsisted on raw potatoes and river water. Of the original patrol, six men returned by paddling or swimming the Rhine, one was seriously wounded and taken prisoner, the other three were killed in action.

On the 5th of April, XXII Corps ordered the 94th Division, the 101st Airborne and the 82d Airborne Divisions, all of which were





*A night patrol is briefed on its mission. Left to right: Lieutenant George O. Pommer, Private First Class Edward Grosseveh, Staff Sergeant Jack Robinson, Staff Sergeant Daniel Willhim, Technical Sergeant Malcolm Pickett, Captain Herman Kops, Jr., Captain Burgess G. Hodges, and Lieutenant Ervin M. Tiller, Jr.*

under its control, to intensify patrol activity to relieve pressure along the front of XVIII Airborne Corps attacking the Ruhr Pocket from the north, on the east of the Rhine. Four patrols dispatched by the Division that same night found the enemy on the alert. Intense small-arms fire and numerous flares prevented three of the groups from landing. For the next eight days active, aggressive patrolling continued. It soon became a routine chore.

Coincident with the assumption of the tactical situation, Division assumed responsibility for administering military government activities in the six hundred square miles of German territory within the zone of the 94th. Unit commanders soon found themselves in the joint role of military governor and troop commander. The 376th Infantry which was in reserve, was the only regiment that could devote itself exclusively to occupation duties. As time progressed and the Ruhr Pocket was gradually reduced, emphasis passed from the tactical to occupational duties.

The problems that began to confront Lieutenant Colonel William St. Clair, Division G-5, and his assistant, Major Harry Green, were



*German civilians reading a proclamation of the Supreme Allied Commander posted on the wall of an air-raid shelter in Krefeld*

diversified and difficult. Furthermore, they required urgent attention. German civilians had to be organized, fed and set to work. Huge numbers of slave laborers liberated by the American advance had to be rounded up, placed in camps and processed for return to their native lands. In particular, the Russians needed special attention and care until such time as there was a junction of the Eastern and Western Fronts and a route to their homeland became available. Health regulations had to be published and enforced to prevent epidemics of contagious diseases. Food supplies had to be allocated and every opportunity made available for communities to return to self-sufficiency. New ordinances were proclaimed and these too had to be enforced. To prevent further propagation of the Nazi doctrine, schools were closed. In addition, all civilians had to be registered and inter-community travel prohibited. Unit commanders within their respective areas set about these and many related tasks, assisted by G-5 and the military government teams with each unit. Moreover, commanders were also responsible for industrial and engineer surveys and salvage operations. Undischarged members of the *Wehrmacht*, who had returned to civilian life by merely shedding their uniforms, had to be



Captain Burgess G. Hodges issues orders to the director of a Duisburg steel mill, while Lieutenant James W. Butler and Captain William B. Harvey, on his left, look on

apprehended and screened. Also, there was a constant quest for Nazi big shots, Gestapo agents and SS thugs.

On April 10, the sector of responsibility of the Division was expanded. The new boundaries were non-tactical following the perimeters of German administrative areas called *Landkreise* and *Stadtkreise* which are similar to American counties. These *Landkreise* and *Stadtkreise* were agencies within themselves including such departments as local police, food procurement and management bureaus, health commissions and judicial systems. To all but the latter, civilians were appointed to office after they had been approved by the Counter-intelligence Corps.

Military government officers, among whom were Major Frank R. Bayle, Major Francis W. Haegler, and Captain William H. Mondell, assisted the various unit commanders within their new responsibilities. In the industrial cities of Rheinhausen and Homberg there were several plants devoted to the manufacture of steel and iron products. These factories were inspected and inventoried, their staffs reassembled and back wages paid to employees with a view toward their reopening. Police dockets were cleared of scores of people who had been jailed without having charges preferred against them. Such cases were



*Evacués of Osterath, located within the zone of operations along the Rhine, revisit their homes under Military Government supervision to gather food and clothing*

brought before military government officers acting as magistrates. CIC investigations revealed that many civilian administrators fell into the "mandatory removal" class and these men were replaced. In Homberg the mayor was removed for this reason. Entire police forces had to be relieved of office in other towns and cities, substitutes obtained, trained and given authority to act. In the areas of the 301st and 302d Infantry along the Rhine, there was the additional problem of keeping civilians from returning to the restricted area which extended westward five hundred yards from the river. This sector had been declared a military zone and all civilians removed from it. During the Division's occupation of the Krefeld area, attempts at sabotage and subversive acts by German civilians were few and of a minor nature.

Displaced persons (DPs) presented many problems even after they were located in retaining camps. Feeding these vast numbers of former slave laborers proved difficult as their food supplies were drawn from captured German dumps which were never completely adequate for the demands placed upon them. Krefeld *Kaserne*, the largest DP camp in the Division area was a deserted army barrack capable of housing three thousand persons. On April 13 it held 1,458 DPs including Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Italians, Lithuanians, Dutch and Yugoslavs. Both Russians and Slavs had old scores to settle with the Germans and did so at every opportunity. Looting and mayhem on the part of displaced persons were common when they were beyond





The carcass of a cow, which was blown into the rafters by fire of the Division Artillery on Mündelheim, is inspected by two men of the Division

the surveillance of the camp guards. On one occasion in Krefeld, the *Bürgermeister* called a meeting of the townspeople on the orders of the military government. Addressing his remarks pointedly to the Russians present, the *Bürgermeister* announced that effective immediately stealing would cease, under penalty of arrest. A Russian female in the crowd slapped her thigh and roared: "I'm accused of stealing? I've been stolen!"

Meanwhile, there was still a tactical situation. Patrol action across the Rhine continued and the artillery battalions of the Division actively engaged targets across the river. Despite the fact that observation was poor, interdiction fire, harassing fire and area target shooting inflicted extensive damage on German personnel and matériel. Some counter-battery fire was received but this was spotty and there were no large concentrations. The regimental antitank companies had been issued 3-inch guns to replace their 57s and were attached to the artillery to utilize these new weapons.



*A patrol conducting search operations in Mündelheim*

After several patrols from the 302d had failed to discover any trace of the enemy on the neck of land in the vicinity of Serm, opposite Uerdingen, orders were received to send a reinforced company across the Rhine to occupy this area. On April 13, at 0730 hours, Company E of the 302d, commanded by Lieutenant James W. Butler and reinforced with a section of 81mm mortars, a section of HMGs and a squad from the battalion A&P Platoon, crossed the river in rubber assault boats. No fire was directed against the company while it was crossing, but as it moved toward its objective six rounds of artillery fell in the immediate vicinity. There were no casualties and the troops resumed their advance as the fire lifted. The town of Mündelheim was then occupied without opposition and an all-around defense established. It was soon learned that the German troops had evacuated the area; the fact that an American crossing was anticipated was evidenced by the number of white flags hanging from doors and windows throughout the town.

Lieutenant Seeby, the following day, led a Company C patrol out of Serm on reconnaissance. This group of twenty men was to move to a point beyond the town of Angermund to determine whether or not there were any German forces in the vicinity. Skirting the town, the patrol was advancing toward its objective when it came under fire.



Staff Sergeant Jerome F. Fatora who was a member of this party supplied the following account of the subsequent action.

Detecting us in observation of their emplacements, the Heinies brought 40mm AA fire to bear on the route we had used to enter the area. Simultaneously, other Krauts on the right and left, working with clock-like precision, were maneuvering to outflank us while keeping us hemmed in with fire. Consequently, Lieutenant Seeby decided to regroup the patrol for a better defense and to take advantage of the cover of some shrubbery in the vicinity. Using the old infantry "fire and movement" we managed to reach a house around which we planned to build our defense . . .

So many incidents occurred during the unforgettable night that followed that to record them would take pages. Never once did any of the patrol despair or give up hope of escape. Not even when Private First Class Joe Turner was fatally wounded by a German 34 machine gun or when those bastards, under the cover of darkness, crawled close enough to bounce hand grenades off the sides of the house.

Frequently during the night we were asked to surrender, only to reply with hot lead. First bazookas smashed the house and machine guns raked all the doors and windows. Still our command group met and formulated plans . . .

It was not until early the next morning, after several attempts to escape had proved futile and the Heinies had battered the cellar entrance with *Panzerfausts*, that we gave up all hope of escape. About eight o'clock in the morning the Jerries, numbering seventy-five in all, rushed the house. In a melodramatic speech, their lieutenant shouted to us in perfect English, "Gentlemen (all of a sudden he considered us gentlemen) you have five minutes to surrender." "Surrender to us," cried Lieutenant Seeby. "Sir," cracked his reply, "I am an officer and a soldier and as such I have my orders which I must obey. You have four minutes." "But you are already caught in the center of a huge pincers." "My men and I realize that but we have superiors over us to whom we must answer and anyway," he hesitated a few seconds and then went on, "you will be prisoners only a few days before you are freed by your comrades. You have two minutes left."

All this time Private First Class White had been trying desperately to repair the radio. His efforts produced results and we contacted battalion forward CP. The German lieutenant chimed in, "You have one minute remaining. You are surrounded. Think it over." Our radio went out again. "Your time is up, gentlemen, are you coming out?"

Silence fell over the room as Lieutenant Seeby replied, "Yeah, we're coming out."

After a guard was arranged we started our long journey to a PW cage . . . After about seven hours of combing the district of Mettmann we were brought to a regimental CP. The major who talked to us there looked as if he had just that minute stepped out of a German soldier's field manual. He had that typical arrogant, cocky Nazi air about him. After he made a few wisecracks about the Yanks he told the guards to take us in to the interrogation team.

The interrogator, who later informed me that his rank was comparable to that of first sergeant (and I noted that his methods were too) spoke perfect English.



*Ceremony conducted in front of Division Headquarters in Krefeld on April 14, 1945, in memory of President Franklin D. Roosevelt*

"Your name?"

"Jerome Fatora," I replied.

"Your rank?"

"Staff Sergeant."

"Your army serial number?"

"33765250."

And in the same tone, continuing to write as he questioned, "Where were you born?"

Quickly I barked, "Under the Geneva Convention all that I am required to tell you is my name, rank and serial number and that is all I'll give you."

Changing to another subject, he asked, "Isn't the 94th Division Headquarters in Krefeld?" I refused to comment.

The following morning we were gathered together and hiked to a PW cage along with some Frenchmen who had been prisoners since Dunkirk.

Late that afternoon we were liberated by the 59th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 13th Armored Division. We were attached to Company B until further notice and fought as armored infantrymen. We returned to the Division late in the afternoon of April 18.

This episode could not be complete without giving the names of the men and credit for the courage they displayed on this patrol. They included: Lieutenant Carl Seeby, Staff Sergeant William Wollenberg, Staff Sergeant Harold Smith, Sergeant Herber Burns, Sergeant Edward Gaines, Technician Fifth Grade David Rowland, Technician Fourth Grade Lorenzo Gujardo, Private First Class Earl Kroll, Private First Class John Koslop, Private First Class Harry Wolfgang, Private First Class James White, Private First Class William Pleasonton, Private First Class Donald Wheeler, Private First Class Joseph Turner, Private First Class Willard Fisher, Private First Class Leo Fahey, Private First Class Paul Wagner, Private First Class James Jewell, and Private First Class Anthony Lazzaroni.

By this time, enemy resistance in Europe was in its last stages. The Ruhr Pocket had been split and was yielding prisoners by the thousands. To the east the Allied and Russian fronts had almost joined. Then unexpectedly came tragic news. President Roosevelt, the Commander-in-Chief, had died in the late afternoon of April 12, 1945. The blow was doubly tragic in that the President did not live to see the victory which was so close and for which he had given so much. Throughout the 94th Division on April 14, appropriate ceremonies were conducted in respect to the memory of the wartime leader of the United States.

On the 16th, the Ruhr Pocket collapsed and the Division Artillery reported its guns had fired their 203,871st combat round of ammunition. Two days later the Division front was entirely uncovered. The POW bag which had been estimated at 100,000 German troops, rose to 315,000 including fifty-one general officers. Thus, the mission of an active defense terminated; the Division was officially out of contact.





Vehicles of the 94th Division move across the Rhine via the treadway bridge connecting Neuss and Düsseldorf

## Chapter 43: DÜSSELDORF

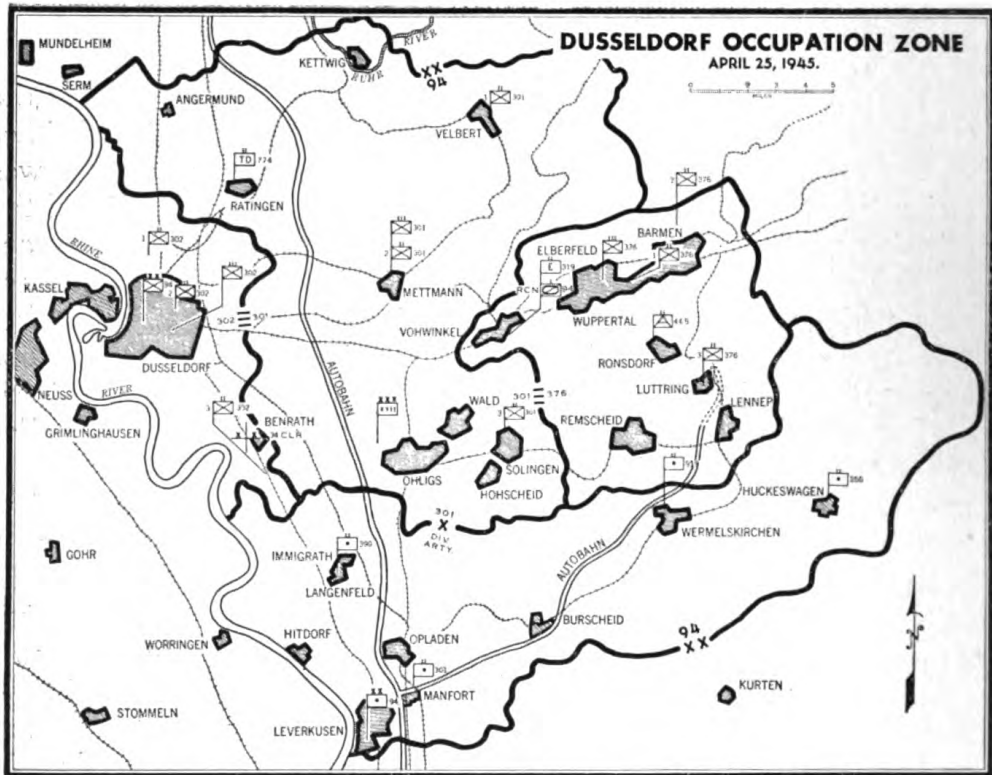
ON APRIL 20 the Division was alerted for movement across the Rhine to assume new occupation duties in the vicinity of either Düsseldorf or Essen. Two days later the Düsseldorf sector was assigned to the 94th, and the 250th Field Artillery Group relieved the Division of its responsibility in the Krefeld area. Following a reconnaissance by the unit commanders, the Division staff planned and coordinated movement across the river. This was complicated by the fact that there were only two bridges over the Rhine available to the troops of the 94th. Using the engineer ponton bridges at Orsoy and Düsseldorf, most of the Division crossed by the 25th and began the relief of the 8th Infantry Division.

By this time, XXII Corps had assumed control of *Regierungsbezirks* Cologne, Düsseldorf and Aachen, an area of 5,394 square miles of German soil, embracing the northern half of the Rhine Province. In *Regierungsbezirks* Düsseldorf, which was the zone of the 94th Division, lay the western half of the Ruhr District, the world's most heavily populated industrial area prior to the war. Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Elberfeld, Solingen, Vohwinkel, Remscheid and Mettmann are all in this area. Division headquarters was situated in Düsseldorf in the main offices of the Krupp Steel Works. The 302d Infantry also established headquarters in Düsseldorf. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Gaddis, who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Anderson on his transfer to XXII Corps headquarters, the 376th Infantry set up headquarters in Wuppertal. Colonel Hagerty's CP was at Mettmann, and Division Artillery located in the I. G. Farben plant in Leverkusen.

Once settled east of the Rhine, the Division prepared to tackle the same type of duties that it had encountered in the Krefeld area. Since the new DP problem was even greater and more complex, a special staff section was created for the administration of the displaced persons and their camps. Lieutenant Colonel Vernon W. McGuckin, Division Chemical Warfare Officer, took charge and each Division unit appointed a displaced persons officer to function under Lieutenant Colonel McGuckin's supervision.

In addition to the task of displaced-persons administration, the 94th was responsible for over-all security; area control; salvage of cached and abandoned arms, equipment, ammunition and demolitions; and protection of the Rhine bridges. A comprehensive plan of foot and motorized patrols was initiated and twice daily aerial reconnaissance was conducted by Division artillery liaison planes. Ground patrols enforced military government regulations, curfew restrictions, travel prohibitions, apprehended prisoners of war, located and reported aban-

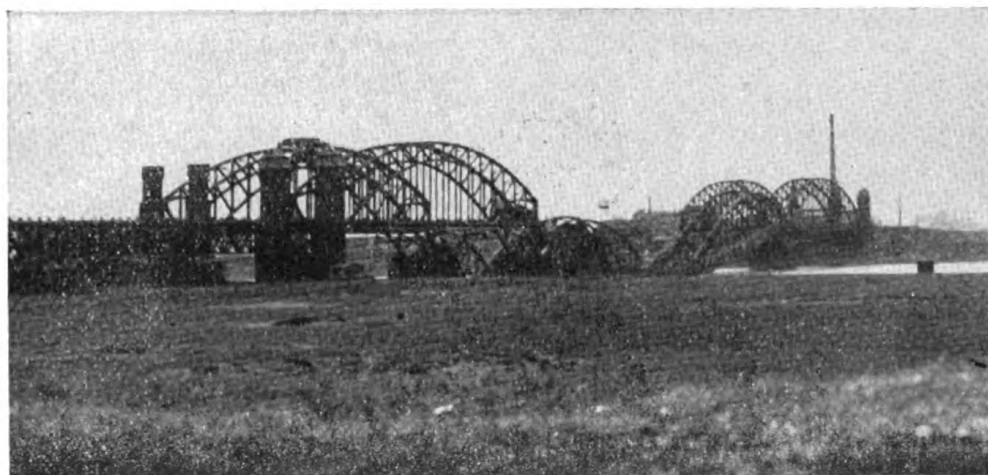




done enemy installations and matériel. Security guard posts were maintained in accordance with priorities indicated by Fifteenth Army on bridges, tunnels, intelligence targets, quartermaster depots, displaced persons camps, civilian food warehouses, ammunition dumps, telephone and telegraph exchanges, radio stations and military headquarters. Approximately 6,100 men of the Division were engaged in these duties daily. Another 1,200 men and officers conducted search operations. Every residence in the Division zone was entered and searched for contraband which included weapons, radio transmitters, binoculars, cameras and such items as might be used harmfully against the occupation troops. For the most part, the German civil population extended fullest cooperation during these operations. In Vohwinkel, an old man of about seventy-five opened his door in response to the knock of a sergeant leading a search party. Upon seeing the uniforms, the white-bearded, doddering character snapped to attention, clicked his heels and shooting his arm forward and upward in the Nazi salute, shouted "Heil Hitler!" The NCO, who spoke German, remarked laconically, "Wrong army, bud!" To this the old fellow replied: "You'll have to excuse me, gentlemen. It was just force of habit."

As a result of the Division's work, tons of explosives, numerous enemy weapons and field pieces, mines, flame throwers, rocket launch-





*Düsseldorf railroad bridge, destroyed by the Germans as they withdrew across the Rhine*

ers and searchlights were located along with a few railroad guns. All usable items were evacuated through supply channels to central collecting points established by higher headquarters.

Since the need for bridges across the Ruhr River in the vicinity of Duisburg was acute, Companies B and C of the 319th Engineers were assigned construction jobs. As a result two floating Baileys were opened for traffic on May 5. Company C named its bridge for Sergeant Peter Medwick, the unit's first fatality, killed in action near Blain, France on September 14, 1944. The Schreier Bridge, constructed by Company B, honored Staff Sergeant John L. Schreier, killed in action on January 23, 1945 at Besch, Germany.

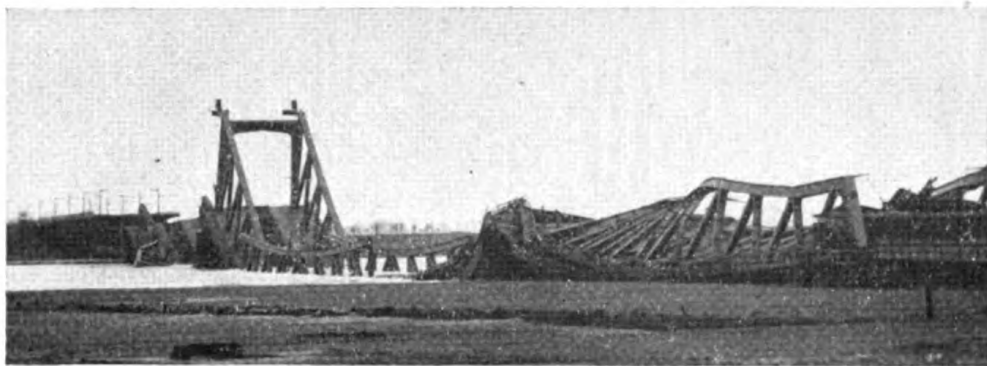
Troops of the Division not actively engaged in occupation duties during this period were given training in foreign languages, physical exercise, first aid and dismounted drill. Also, great emphasis was placed on the Division Information and Education program which sought to familiarize all personnel with the events leading to the victory in Europe which was then within sight. Preparations were made for participation in an extended athletic and educational program after the official surrender of the German forces. This athletic schedule was planned and initiated by Captain James A. Roy of the G-3 staff.

Early on the morning of April 27, a Dutch river barge named the *Alexander* broke free from its moorings on the Rhine and crashed into the floating bridge at Düsseldorf. This collision broke the bridge into three sections, one of which remained anchored in the middle of the river. After being brought under control, the barge, which was loaded with over a thousand tons of coal, was carefully examined for evidence of sabotage. It was discovered that the mooring cable had been pounded and smashed with some heavy instrument, to the point where



*Bailey bridge, dedicated to the memory of Ernie Pyle, connecting Düsseldorf and Grimlinghausen*





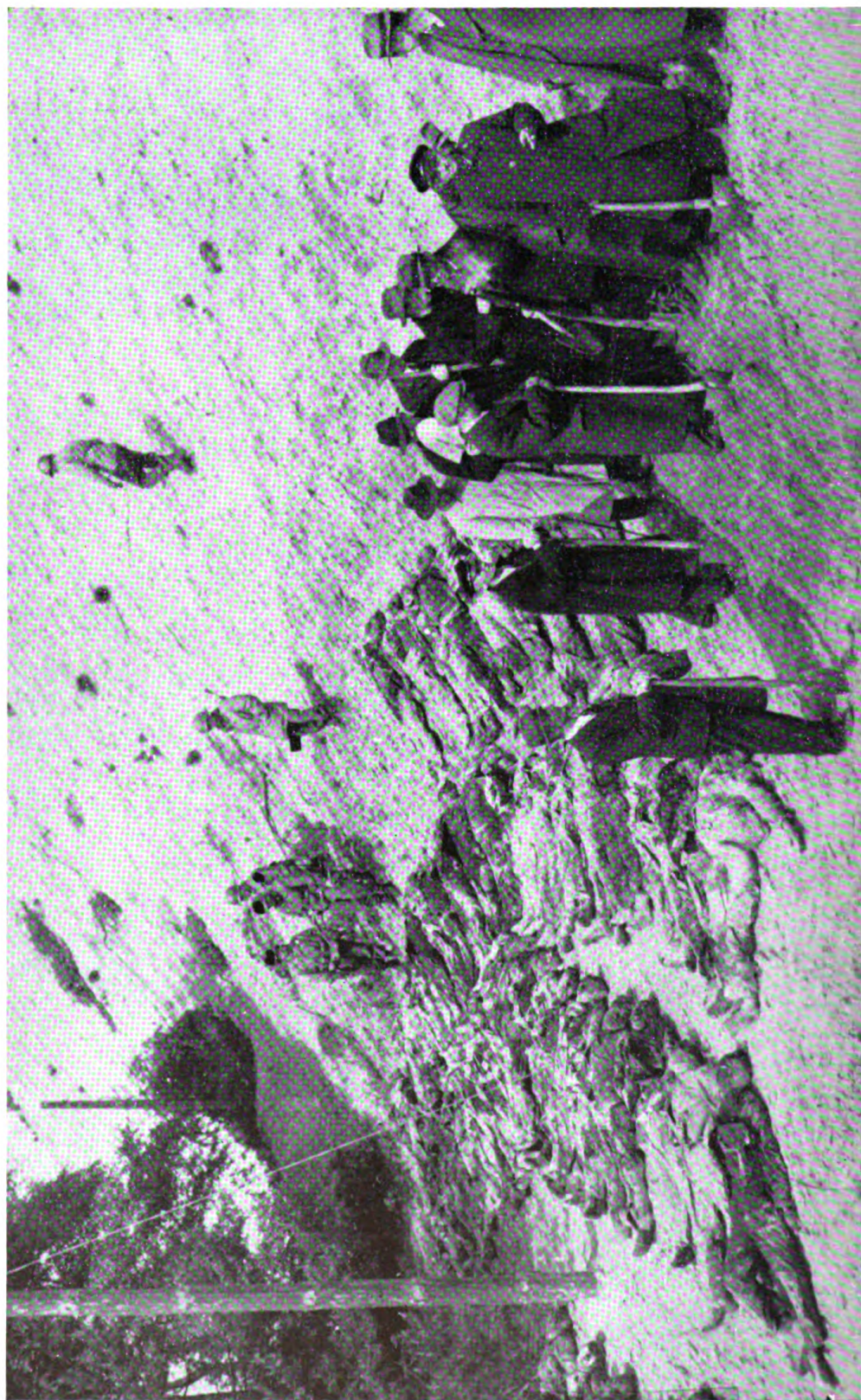
*Düsseldorf highway bridge, destroyed by the Nazis*

the pull of the current severed the remaining strands. As a result of this incident, the antitank guns of the 302d Infantry were emplaced upstream from the bridge site during and after repairs, to sink any heavy object turned loose to float down the river.

Later the same day, Joseph Strack, a German civilian reported to be a block leader of the Nazi Party, was picked up by Company C of the 302d Infantry. This man who freely confessed his Party connections was placed in a jeep under guard; the group then departed for CIC headquarters. The prisoner and his guard were in the rear of the vehicle while the driver rode alone in the front of the jeep. Suddenly, the prisoner attempted to hook his left arm around the driver's neck, at the same time reaching for the .45 the driver was wearing. Unable to bring his carbine to bear, the guard drew his own pistol and shot the civilian in the neck. It is believed that Strack died immediately. Effects of the deceased were turned over to CIC.

Control of civilian traffic across the Rhine became a joint G-2 and Military Government undertaking. There were thousands of Germans who had fled east of the river to escape the American offensive and these people now had to be returned to their homes and farms. However, it was obvious that unrestricted passage over the Rhine could not be tolerated. While construction of a second Bailey bridge at Düsseldorf was under way, proclamations were posted throughout the countryside announcing the time and place of application for permits to recross the river. With the opening of the Ernie Pyle Bridge, supervised crossings began. After being screened by the CIC, civilians were issued Military Government passes and proceeded to a barbed-wire inclosure about a mile from the river. Here they were deloused by DDT dusting teams, supervised by Lieutenant Duane A. Hansen, given a second CIC screening and kept under guard until the following morning. Between the hours of 0500 and 0700 each day processed German civilians were permitted to cross the Rhine. In nine days over





Part of the work detail of former Nazi Party members used to exhume bodies from the mass grave near Ohligs





*Captain Edward Levy of the Division's CIC Detachment, interviewing Hans Goebbels (brother of Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment) after his arrest near Düsseldorf*

14,000 Germans used the Ernie Pyle Bridge to return to their homes.

A short time after the 390th Field Artillery Battalion moved into its assigned area, rumors of a recent mass burial began to be heard. Investigations were started and the grave located in a sandpit off a lonely road, in the vicinity of the town of Ohligs. The pit was surrounded by scrub pine and indications were that the location had been used as an ammunition dump at some time in the past. By probing the bodies were easily located, as they were covered with less than a foot of loose sand.

Lieutenant Edwin B. Rosenzweig, Division graves registration officer, was placed in charge of the removal of these bodies. As an object lesson, the task of exhuming the bodies, which was performed on the 30th of April, was assigned to a detail of forty known local Nazi Party members. The detail was composed largely of professional and business men. Many reported in their best dress clothing and high hats. Numbered among the group was a banker, one of the wealthiest men in the Ruhr. A goodly number of the group were of the opinion that they were being taken out to be executed. Before setting to work the Nazi digging party was admonished that if a careless shovel struck a single one of the corpses the job would be finished by hand. Then the work began. Sixty-four of the seventy-one bodies found were identified. All were political prisoners who had been confined to an asylum (a favorite ruse) by the Germans. Prior to the fall of the Ruhr Pocket, these people had been brought to the sandpit by truck, tied



Lieutenant Colonel A. H. Smith (left) of the War Crimes Branch of the JAGD, and Lieutenant Walter Szeliga view the bodies of some of the seventy-one German political prisoners uncovered in the vicinity of Ohligs

together in twos and shot through the back of the head. Investigation later revealed the date of the mass murder as April 13, 1945.

To witness the reburial of these victims of the Nazi system, the *Bürgermeister* of Ohligs had been ordered to assemble at least a thousand of his fellow townspeople. At 1000 hours on the morning following the exhuming, three thousand persons were gathered in front of the Ohligs Town Hall. Individual graves had been dug in the town square, floored with new boards and lined with pine boughs covered with purple and white lilacs. When the trucks bearing the bodies arrived, the digging party unloaded the cadavers and lowered each gently into its new grave. The odors emanating from the bodies was nauseating; the condition of some of the corpses gruesome. One body minus a leg was buried with the crutch that supported its owner when he was shot. For two hours the task continued while the onlookers stood silent and observant. To keep from fainting most of the spectators were forced to cover their noses with handkerchiefs. When the last body had been lowered into its final resting place, all present were required to pass before the graves and view the bodies before they were covered. Then the entire population of Ohligs was charged with





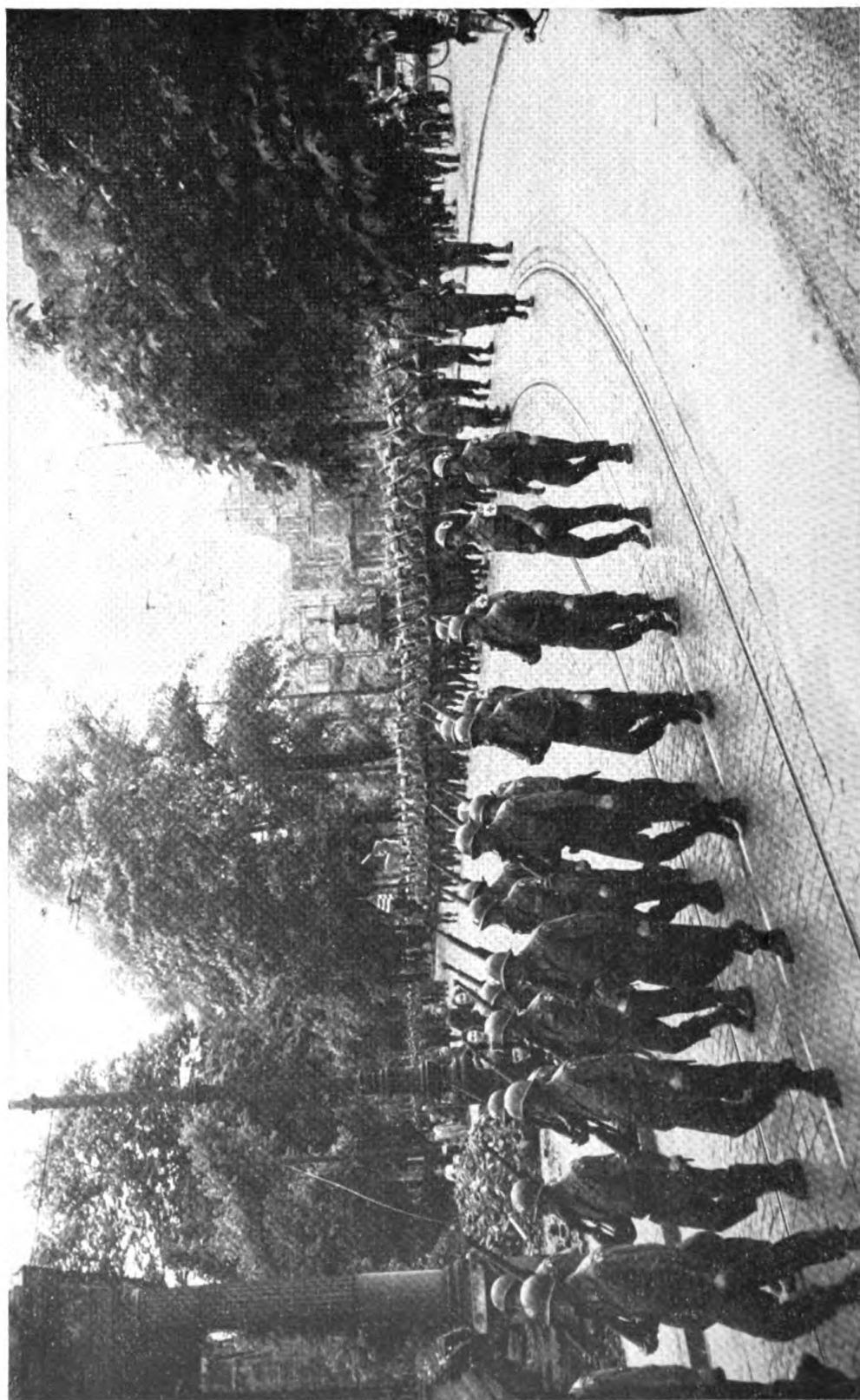
*Permanent, marked graves being prepared in front of the Ohligs town hall for the murdered political prisoners*

the permanent care of this little cemetery in the center of their town.

A Protestant and a Catholic chaplain and an enlisted Jewish cantor of the Division conducted services, as did a German Catholic priest and Lutheran minister. The *Bürgermeister* of Ohligs and a civilian official from Solingen, Herr Max Reiss, next addressed the assembled people. The most sounding passage uttered by the *Bürgermeister* is worthy of quote:

May the dead men rest in peace in front of the City House and may the vault represent a monument of admonition to all the citizens, with a view to do all in their power, to prevent for all time such inhuman crimes. . . . We are not able to dry the ocean of tears caused by the Hitler régime and all those who ran along with it; but, we can now vow, no more again the German name will be associated with a system from another world.

The 919th Field Artillery Battalion also made an interesting but more pleasant find during the early part of May. Following the questioning of the *Bürgermeister* of Wermelskirchen and several former members of the German Foreign Department by personnel of Division Artillery, Corporal Robert Teats of Headquarters Battery discovered a stolen Dutch art collection in a storeroom of the local *Hitler-Jugend*



Troops of the 319th Engineer Battalion parading in Düsseldorf on VE-day

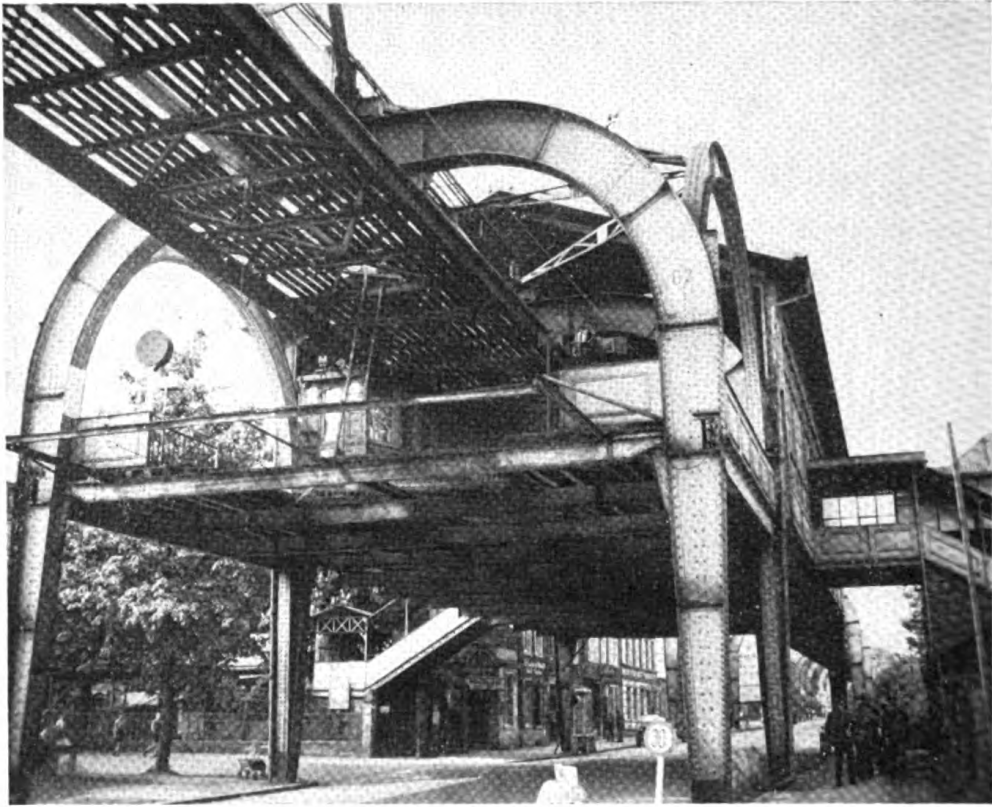
*Hostel.* There were about seventy-five paintings, some tapestries and oriental rugs. These objects of art had been appropriated by the Germans from influential citizens of Arnhem, Holland, and brought to the Ruhr for sale as house furnishings to wealthy Nazis. Among the higher valued paintings were some sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch works, several of which were executed by W. F. van der Haagen, a contemporary of Van Dyke. According to Lieutenant Ronald Miller, Service Battery, 919th Field Artillery, a graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute, a large number were tempera paintings done on gesso board. Total value of the collection was estimated at \$100,000.

Less than a week later came news that victory had been won. A SHAEF TWX informed General Malony, on the afternoon of May 7, 1945, that the German High Command had signed an unconditional surrender of all land, sea and air forces at 0141 hours that morning. This news had been expected for many days and was greeted soberly by the men of the Division. There was still another war being waged in the Pacific and final peace seemed far distant. Moreover, the price that the Division had paid as its contribution toward victory could not be overlooked. As a result of its 209<sup>1</sup> combat days, 1087 men and officers had been killed in action or succumbed to wounds and injuries received in battle; 4684 more had been wounded or injured in action; 113<sup>2</sup> persons were missing; and 5028 of the Division's personnel had become casualties due to trench foot, frozen feet or other non-battle causes. In addition 45 men of the 94th met non-battle deaths. Only 719 of the battle casualties listed above were inflicted during the fighting in Brittany. Thus, in the 78 days from January 7, 1945, to March 25, 1945, during which the 94th was constantly in contact with the enemy, the Division suffered the bulk of its 10,957 casualties. These were sobering figures. The 26,638 Germans taken prisoner, the large tracts of enemy territory conquered, the hundreds of cities, towns and villages taken and the vast *Wehrmacht* stores and equipment captured or destroyed, did little to offset the loss in friends and comrades.

On VE-day, due to the efforts of Lieutenant George C. Walsh and his Public Relations Section, *The Attack*, official weekly newspaper of the Division, ran a souvenir Victory Edition, its first European extra. The paper was printed in the *Nachrichten* publishing plant in Düssel-

<sup>1</sup>September 10, 1944 to January 1, 1945, both inclusive; January 7, 1945 to March 25, 1945, both inclusive; April 2, 1945 to April 18, 1945, both inclusive.

<sup>2</sup>These battle casualties are taken from a report prepared by the Division Adjutant General on November 5, 1945. Since that date the number of dead from all causes has increased to 1,210.



*The Schwebelbahn, Wuppertal's unique ten-mile-long railroad. Cars ran suspended from an overhead track.*

dorf, which had remained in operation until the day before American troops entered the city. Regimental Liaison Officers (Lieutenant Joe W. Watson, 301st; Lieutenant William S. Catherwood III, 302d; Lieutenant Eddie U. Bauknight, 376th) and special couriers rushed the extra to all units of the command. Quoted on the opposite page is the Division Commander's VE-day message to the 94th.

With the official end of the war in Europe, the military government officers found their work broadened and accelerated. The registration of all civilians which had begun early in May was completed before the end of the month. Work was continued on the revitalization of civilian administration and the ousting of former Nazis from office. Officers of the Division were appointed to act on military government courts and by mid-May judicial sessions in Wuppertal were open to the public. In Düsseldorf, Remscheid and Wuppertal, the majority of the banks were re-opened. At Leverkusen and Wuppertal the *I. G. Farben Industrien* plants commenced production of fertilizer and vital medical products. Several sections of railroad in Solingen, Remscheid and Wuppertal were also restored to operation.

## WE HAVE SET A STANDARD

This is the day for which we trained and fought for two and a half years. What it has cost us, you only well know. That we have participated effectively in the days of combat which preceded this Day of Victory is a great satisfaction. We feel justly that we have pulled our share of the load.

Between February 19 and March 5 we breached the Siegfried Switch position and then, assisted by the 10th Armored Division, mopped up all resistance in the Saar-Moselle Triangle; successfully crossed the Saar River in the face of the main Siegfried Line; and established a Corps bridgehead after assisting in capturing Trier.

Between March 13 and March 24 we broke the enemy's lines east of the Saar and advanced to the Rhine; captured an untold booty in supplies and equipment; took over two hundred towns including the key city of Ludwigshafen and captured 13,434 prisoners of war.

This was the first evidence of the dissolution of the German Army west of the Rhine and came after seventy-four consecutive days of attack.

Until March 24 you have never been out of contact with the enemy, more than five days, since September 10.

This Division has never failed in a mission, nor has it ever permanently lost one inch of ground to the enemy; and whatever may be our next mission, we have set a standard which I ask each one of you to make it his personal business to meet.

*HARRY J. MALONY*  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

As before, the food supply was of vital concern for it was obvious from the first that there would be serious shortages in the highly industrialized and thickly populated area managed by the 94th Division. Truck convoys dispatched into surrounding farm areas brought 260 tons of rhubarb, 160 tons of onions and more than 100 tons of other vegetables into the Division area from west of the Rhine. During the month of May other division convoys hauled 1,400 tons of seed potatoes and 100 tons of seed sugar beets to agricultural centers for immediate planting. The Military Government Food Administration Section laid plans for the salvage of several sunken grain barges located in the XXII Corps area as the amount of grain products at the bottom of the Rhine was estimated at between ten and twenty thousand tons. On the 23d of May, the first barge was raised in Düsseldorf Harbor and towed to Bergen Harbor to drying facilities. It contained five hundred tons of rye grain.

Toward the close of May the military government detachments in Düsseldorf, Wuppertal and Remscheid were replaced by British teams, in view of the fact that some time during the following month the 94th was to be relieved by a British unit. Because of the small size of the incoming detachments, a number of American officers were detailed to assist them.

With the fall of the Ruhr Pocket, the G-2 section had switched its emphasis to counterintelligence work, and all but a minimum number of its personnel was attached to CIC. This reinforced the CIC detachments operating throughout the Division area on the apprehension of dangerous Germans, and the interrogation of civilians in the "automatic arrest" category. In addition, endless streams of POWs, DPs, government and police officials were screened.

On the whole the attitude of the German civilians was docile, amenable and cooperative. However, there was evidence that a small Werewolf gang was attempting to operate in the city of Düsseldorf. On the report of an informer that Schloss Eller, a spacious, well preserved stone building in the southern part of Düsseldorf, which had formerly been the headquarters of the *Hitler-Jugend* of that city, had been prepared for demolition, an investigation was instituted. This proved the information received was correct and revealed the following: "The charge of explosive, approximately 50 pounds, consisting of a composition similar to our C-2, was placed in the corner of one of the rooms behind a heater grill. It was tamped with sand and covered with paper and a thin layer of concrete. This charge was primed with an electric cap, wired along the baseboard and door





*May Day celebration in a DP camp in the Division area*

casing, leading through the window, along the building into a body of water, from there up to the road from where it was to have been detonated (approximately 150 yards from the building), as soon as the building became occupied." This wire was cut by CIC personnel, the cap removed and the charge later disposed of by the engineers. There were a few other cases in which buried arms, explosives and food were located. Occasionally lone vehicles were fired upon in the dark along lonely stretches of road and a few booby traps were found.

On May 12, XXII Corps instructed Captain Carl K. Goodson, commanding the Division CIC Detachment, to apprehend a former Hitler bodyguard named Walther von Scheidt and supplied two addresses in Remscheid. Von Scheidt was thought to be distributing funds for the support of a resistance movement and was known to have been a member of a court which adjudicated the cases of 175 Catholic priests. Lieutenant Helling of the CIC Detachment in Remscheid and his agents, assisted by men of Company I of the 376th, raided the given addresses. Von Scheidt was at neither place, but a nephew of the

fugitive furnished a third address. There the ex-bodyguard was taken into custody in his girl friend's bedchamber. During the period from May 8 to June 17, 306 NSDAP officials, 44 Gestapo agents and 73 SS personnel were arrested.

During May displaced persons in that portion of the Ruhr under the control of the 94th reached the staggering total of 62,000 persons, scattered through four hundred DP camps. They included more than 29,000 Russians, in addition to Italians, Poles, French, Dutch, Belgians, Yugoslavs, Bulgars, Czechs, Luxembourgers and Greeks. Plans were laid for the consolidation of these camps and for improving living conditions in general. At many of the smaller camps, the DPs were sustaining themselves by nightly foraging when the Division assumed control. As soon as possible, control was centralized and this decreased looting and violence while facilitating the improvement of sanitary conditions and health among the DPs.

Captain Gilbert S. Merritt and Captain James P. Mullarkey, assisting Lieutenant Colonel McGuckin, assembled truck convoys and the number of French and Belgian DPs needed to fill repatriation quotas allotted by Corps during the early part of May. In nine days, 11,112 displaced persons were thus evacuated from the Division area to their homes. However, the number of Russian, Polish and Ukrainian DPs continued to increase as the troops succeeded in rounding them up.

In the 376th zone, Major Alkie C. Kaufman was appointed Displaced Persons Officer and during the first nine days of May the number of camps in the regimental area was reduced from 200 to 90. Officers were placed in charge of the larger installations and made responsible for their administration. From among the displaced persons, camp leaders and sub-leaders were selected as assistants for the Americans in charge. Under the direction of the regimental surgeon, a DP hospital was set up; here the sick and injured were given treatment.

Captain Joseph W. Francoeur of the 302d took charge of the Ludendorff *Kaserne*, one of the largest camps in the Ruhr. Quartered in the three- and four-story buildings comprising the camp were about three thousand Russians. One building was reserved exclusively for families, while the single men and women were billeted separately in two other buildings. Cleanliness was stressed and the camp soon became noted for its neatness and order. Food was prepared in a vast kitchen that served all members of the camp. During daylight hours a certain number of the DPs were allowed to visit Düsseldorf each day.

On May 18 General Malony received a TWX instructing him to proceed to Washington without delay for conferences with the Chief



*The Doughnut Shop*

of Staff, prior to assuming directorship of the London Munitions Assignment Board. General Malony had organized the 94th, guided it through training, and commanded it during all its fighting days. For his work with the Division he received an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal won in World War I, the Silver Star and Bronze Star Medals. His departure was a sad event for the 94th. Four days later Brigadier General Louis J. Fortier assumed command as the ranking general officer. Colonel John E. Ray became Division Artillery commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Caviness left the 919th Field Artillery to take over as Artillery Executive Officer.

During these days life passed pleasantly for the men of the Division, who were enjoying the best billets of their army service. Clean modern apartment houses and German homes became dormitories for platoons and sections that a few short weeks before had caught what sleep they could in muddy foxholes. There was usually the luxury of a connecting bath and sitting room. Beer was plentiful and the quality fine. As often as not, a keg was found in the kitchen and around this the nightly bull sessions were held. Pianos were requisitioned and there was no want of musical entertainment. Former German occupants of the troop's quarters were relegated to the basement apartments or to houses not under requisition by the Army. Laundry and pressing service was no longer a problem as the *Hausmeister* was only too eager to attend to such chores. DPs were placed on the payroll as janitors,

waitresses, maids and kitchen help. Company commanders lived superbly and first sergeants existed in solitary splendor. The Division staff was billeted in the undamaged portion of the Park Hotel in Düsseldorf which was taken over lock, stock and barrel. Here the officers' mess took on an atmosphere which outshone the best days at Camp Phillips or McCain.

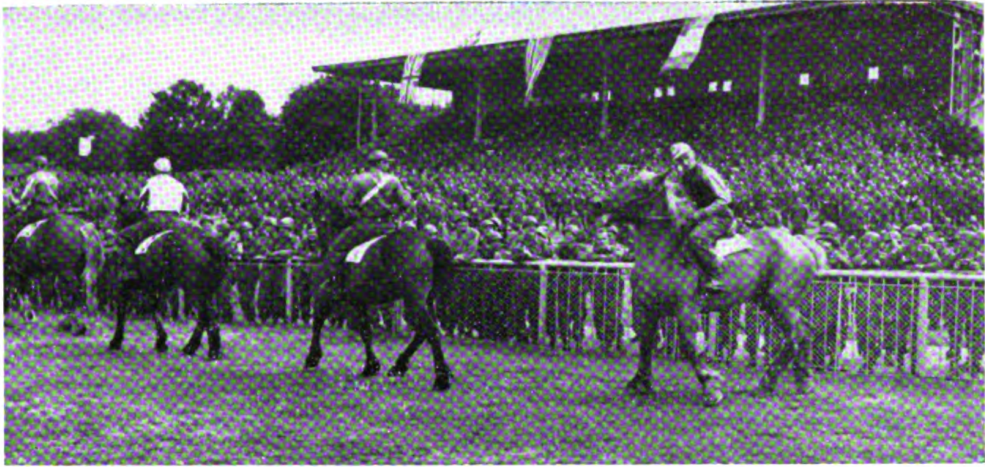
Through the efforts of Lieutenant Colonel William H. Patterson, Division G-1, a Division rest area was opened on April 13, at the resort town of Aywaille, Belgium, within fifteen miles of Liège. Major Fiske Rollins of Division Artillery ran and managed the installation. Men and officers who received 72-hour passes to Aywaille were quartered in hotels and private houses. The people were especially friendly and over two hundred families had volunteered to take soldiers into their homes. Informality of dress and the absence of formations keynoted the program. Highlights of a visit to the rest area were trips to Liège which offered movies, dancing, opera, swimming, night clubs and shopping facilities. By the 3d of June, 5,500 men of the Division had enjoyed the facilities of this rest center.

During this period, many members of the Division visited England on seven-day leaves or furloughs to which travel time was added. The journey to the UK was by truck to Liège, then by train to Le Havre and from there by boat to Southampton. Leaves to the Riviera were still available but scarce.

To improve the local social situation, Mr. Andrew Hodges and Miss Jean Anderson, both of the American Red Cross, imported 120 English-speaking Dutch girls from Venlo, Holland, as dinner guests of the infantry regiments on successive weeks. The first dinner-dance was held on the 21st of May, at *Rhein Terrasse* in Düsseldorf for the men of the 302d Infantry. Lieutenant John F. Cahir, Special Service Officer for the regiment, was in charge of dinner arrangements and the rug-cutting which followed. This affair was a great success. For many of the Dutch girls it was their first dance in more than five years.

As the month of June approached, the ambitious athletic program planned by the Division hit its stride. Softball teams had been formed by all outfits and unit baseball teams played some preliminary games. Lieutenant Anthony Catallo, the 376th's Athletic Officer, and Lieutenant Phil A. Allen worked out daily in the Wuppertal pool with a sizable swimming squad. But, the spotlight was on track and field events. Units concentrated on developing their most powerful teams in hope of procuring candidates for the ETO Championship Track





Top: *The Workhorse Classic, Fifth Race at Truman Park.* Bottom: *General Fortier congratulates a winner.*

Meet which was to feature the champions from the various divisions in the theater.

On June 6, the anniversary of the Normandy D-day, the 94th held its track meet at Bergquist Stadium in Düsseldorf. Formerly known as the Adolf Hitler Sportplatz, this stadium had been the scene of the preliminaries of the 1936 Olympics. For the track meet, it was decorated with the flags of the United Nations and that of the 94th Division. Among the honored guests was General Gerow, the CG of the US Fifteenth Army. Competition was close and keen and enthusiasm ran high. The 376th Infantry and Special Troops shared top honors as both teams amassed thirty-two points. Two days later another highlight of the sporting season took place when the Düsseldorf Race Track was reopened as Truman Park. Under the direction of Captain Ashton of the Reconnaissance Troop, several lively horseraces took place. There were upwards of thirty thoroughbred horses stabled at the park and nine thousand members of the Division attended this gala affair to watch the nags go through their paces.

Early in June, the first train shipments of Russian DPs were started eastward toward Russian occupied territory. On the 10th of the month alone, two thousand of these former slave laborers were loaded on freight cars that were garlanded with flowers and festooned with red flags, and started their long journey home. At the same time, more and more former members of the German Army returned to their homes in the Division's zone. Street-car service was resumed in Wuppertal and throughout the entire area controlled by the 94th, life began to stir in the ruins. Rumors began to circulate too, concerning the next assignment of the Division. It was known that the Ruhr was in the British zone of occupation; soon the 94th would move again.



PART EIGHT  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*"You never had it so good!"*

ANONYMOUS



## *Chapter 44: OCCUPATION*

ON JUNE 7, 1945, the 94th Infantry Division and the 774th TD Battalion were again alerted for movement. This time the destination was Czechoslovakia. Three days later advance parties left Düsseldorf for the new zone of operations. They were to establish command posts and make arrangements for the billeting and disposition of the troops upon their arrival. The 465th AAA Battalion, which was not to accompany the Division, was relieved from attachment on the 12th of June; the same day the British 53d Infantry Division completed its relief of the 94th and assumed responsibility for the Düsseldorf area.

Movement to the vicinity of Strakonice began on the 12th, as the first motor columns of the Division crossed their IPs to start the long march across Europe. Three days were allotted for the journey and small billeting parties preceded the columns by a few hours to make arrangements for each of the overnight bivouacs. The route led generally southeast, then east; from Düsseldorf, past Cologne and through Limburg, Wetzlar, Aschaffenburg, Würzburg, Ansbach, Nürnberg and Wernberg in Germany, to Pilsen, Susice and Strakonice in Czechoslovakia. Following the departure of the motor columns, the foot troops were loaded on 40-and-8s for the third time since arriving on the Continent. No time limit was placed upon their travel as they would be moving over different routes and controlled by non-divisional authorities.

The Division command post opened at Susice on June 12 at 1200 hours. On the 14th, as the first of the troops began arriving, the relief of V Corps Artillery and the 328th Regiment of the 26th Infantry Division began. This was completed by the 17th, although all elements of the Division did not close in the new area until four days later. Prior to the completion of the relief, the 94th Division was transferred from Fifteenth Army to General Patton's Third Army, with which it had done most of its fighting. The Division continued to be part of XXII Corps which had also been assigned to Third Army and had moved into Czechoslovakia.

When the Division assumed responsibility for its new area on the 17th, the primary mission was the establishment and maintenance of roadblocks along some forty miles of the Russian-American Control Line separating the zones of occupation of the United States and the USSR. These outposts were established along the international line of demarkation to prevent unauthorized persons, including soldiers of both armies, from passing between zones. Secondary missions included the guarding of ninety-six security targets, POW and DP camps.

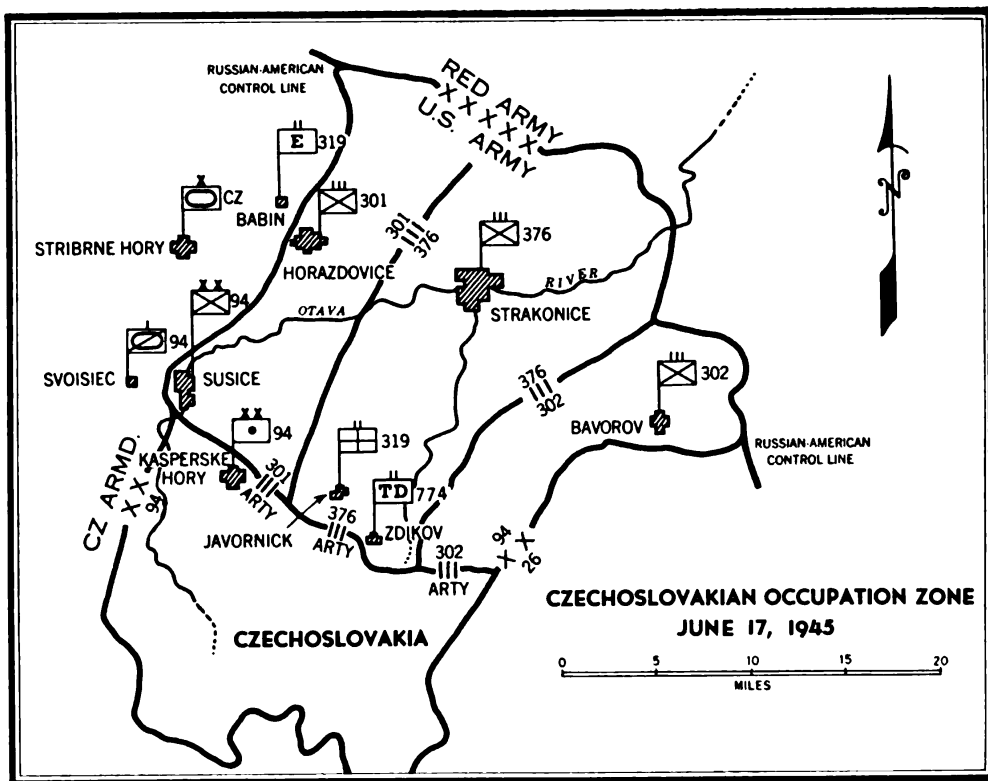
Among the former were power plants, food warehouses, hospitals, industrial establishments, coal stocks, the famous Skoda Armament Works, and captured stores of enemy equipment and matériel. Initially there were five prisoner-of-war and thirty-one displaced-persons camps under Division control; thirteen of the DP camps were not only guarded but also administered by the troops of the 94th.

The G-2 section promptly discovered that security problems in the new area were practically non-existent. Immediately following the liberation of the country, Czech civil and military groups had purged their land almost completely of Nazi officials, authorities and sympathizers. The thoroughness and speed with which the liberated people had wrought vengeance upon the enemy simplified to a great extent the work of military intelligence. Furthermore, the civilian population proved to be one vast counter-intelligence agency, imbued with an intense hatred for things German. CIC agents received the fullest cooperation from the local people who seemed genuinely pleased to be able to work with the American authorities.

Principal G-2 duties were screening German and Austrian DPs, screening German POWs for discharge and repatriation, apprehending the few persons in the "mandatory arrest" category who still existed within the area, and discreet soundings of postwar influences and sentiments. Handling of German and Austrian displaced persons was greatly simplified by the fact that these people were most anxious not to offend the American authorities, who were their only protection against the wrath of the Czechoslovakian people, who, in turn, hated them intensely. As quickly as possible these DPs were screened and repatriated. A "mandatory arrest" search was conducted with the assistance of the local civil and military authorities, but this netted only thirty-seven arrests in all of the 94th's area and these were from among the lowest levels of the Nazi hierarchy.

There were no resistance elements, either active or potential, within the area. However, one incident of violence occurred on June 30. At about 2330 hours an American soldier was fired upon from ambush as he returned to his billet. The pistol shots, directed from some bushes along a roadside ditch, went wild and no damage was done. This soldier had been visiting a Czech family where he paid his respects to a young lady whose acquaintance he had made some ten days earlier. Investigation led to the conclusion that the act was committed by a jealous suitor.

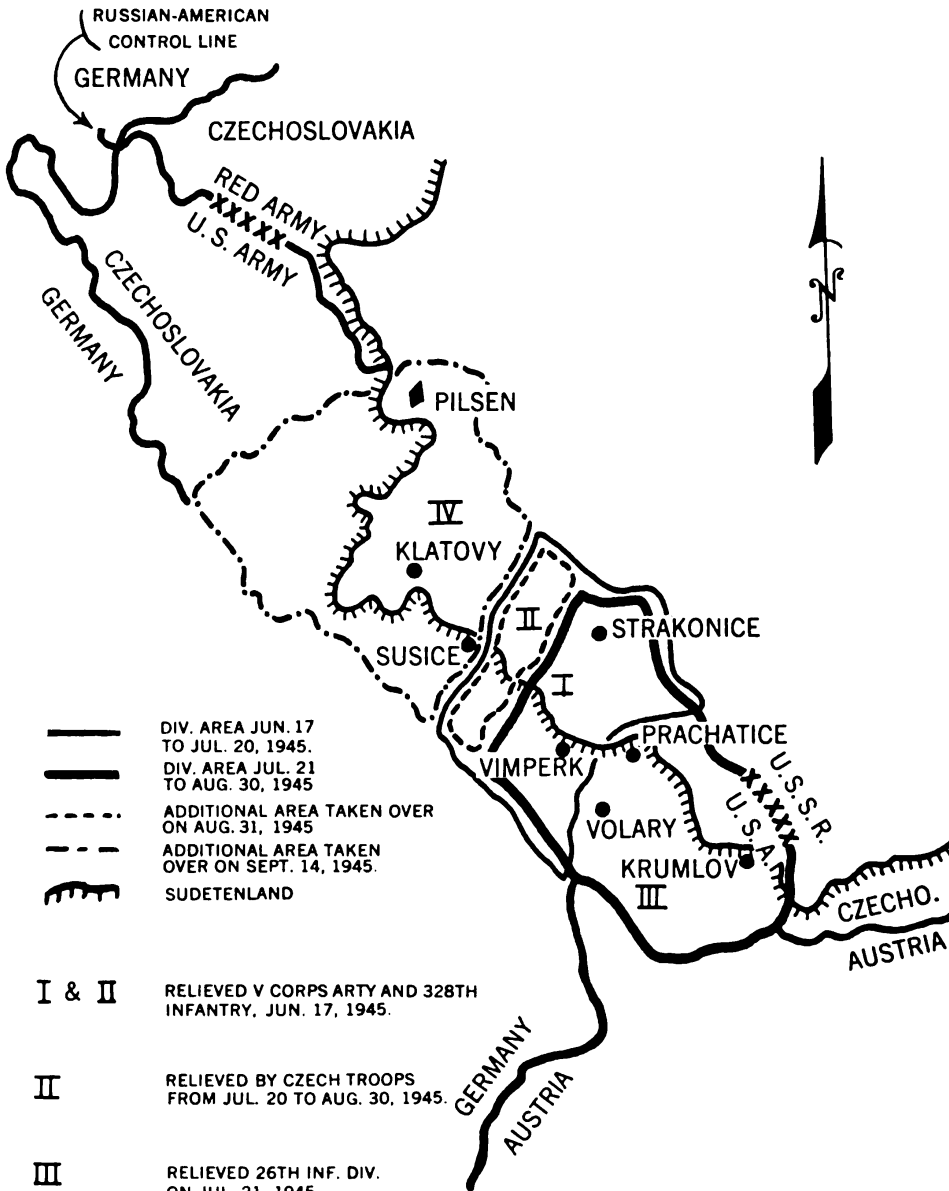
Major General Allison J. Barnett, formerly the Commanding General of the 70th Infantry Division, which was in the process of re-



deployment, assumed command of the 94th on August 1, 1945. At this time, General Fortier reverted to his original command: CG 94th Division Artillery.

During the period from mid-June to the end of September, the zone of the Division was expanded both to the north and south. On July 21, after having turned over the northern portion of the original occupation area to Czechoslovakian troops, the 94th assumed responsibility for the zone of the 26th Infantry Division which lay to the south. This added thirty-seven security targets, seventy-three miles of Russian-American Control Line and 710 square miles of occupation territory to the responsibility of the Division. In conjunction with this expansion, the Division CP moved to Prachatice where it began operations on July 21 at 1115 hours. The Czech I Armored Corps' area, to the north of the 94th Division's zone, was taken over again on August 31. This action brought 380 more miles of territory and thirteen additional security targets under control of the 94th. The zone of the 8th Armored Division, still farther to the north, was taken over on September 14, adding forty more security targets and twenty-two roadblocks to the total. It increased the territory occupied by the Division to a total of 3,600 square miles and brought to 190 miles the length of Russian-American Control Line for which the Division was responsible.

# CZECHOSLOVAKIAN OCCUPATION ZONE JUN. 17, TO SEP. 14, 1945







Nazdroviel

Coincident with these additions to the Division's zone, redeployment greatly reduced the strength of the 94th. By the end of September the Division could muster only 10,800 men. Also, for varying periods of time during the month, the 356th and 919th Field Artillery Battalions were attached to XXII Corps Artillery and operated outside the Division zone of occupation. Because of the decrease in personnel and area expansion, many roadblocks were discontinued and others relocated. Seventeen of the original security targets were turned over to Czechoslovakian authorities; forty-six were discontinued. All POW camps in the Division area were evacuated with the exception of the one in Pilsen which had been taken over from XXII Corps on September 14. Plans were made for Czechoslovakian authorities to administer the DP camps being run by the Division. While these installations were under control of the 94th, 14,550 displaced persons were evacuated, including 2,664 Silesians and Romanians who were conducted to the Russian zone of occupation.

With the expansion of the Division zone the G-2 mission did not change. A check of the new area for personnel in the "mandatory arrest" category further demonstrated the previous thoroughness of the Czechoslovakians in eliminating persons tainted with the Nazi ideology. The CIC, in addition to its other duties, screened nearly seven hundred civilians in order that they might be employed in various housekeeping activities by divisional units.



*Fourth of July parade in Pilsen*



In spite of the number of roadblocks along the Russian-American Control Line, there was considerable line-crossing on the part of Red Army soldiers. Since it was the policy of the higher commands of both occupation forces to prevent all but necessary contacts between their respective troops, G-2 personnel were charged with the return of Russians found in the American zone without proper authority. At first apprehended persons were returned to Russian territory at the closest point along the line of demarkation. In most instances this proved satisfactory, but there were a few regrettable incidents. Hence, in the beginning of September, three portal points were established for all persons entering or leaving the Division area. These were located at Rokycany, Tremosna and the junction of Highways 95 and 12, west of Pisek. This proved conducive to Russian-American harmony.

Screening of German and Austrian DPs was constantly accelerated since the presence of these persons was a point of friction with the Czechoslovakians. In regard to POWs, screening was continued and efforts made to process and grant releases to former members of the *Wehrmacht* who had not been captured but had merely returned to their homes and farms.

To gain a better understanding of the local people and promote harmonious relations between the Czechs and the Americans, weekly public opinion polls were conducted. These revealed among other things that in the southern half of the Division zone, which was mostly Sudetenland, there was considerable hostility toward the occupation troops. Main points of friction were the fraternization of the Americans with German female DPs and interference, actual or inferred, of American authorities in local politics. The Czechoslovakian population was determined to achieve complete civil and national autonomy and the rehabilitation of an independent state without outside interference or pressure. To rewin the confidence of the Czech people, numerous joint social functions were arranged. Also, the Division assisted in gathering the fall harvest. Toward this end, 198 American trucks hauled 669 tons of produce for the farmers and supplied 30,078 gallons of gasoline and 5,000 gallons of Diesel fuel for the operation of threshing machines and other farm equipment. These acts combined with the fact that all problems could be readily taken up with the American authorities helped greatly in improving relations.

While in Czechoslovakia, the troops of the 94th conducted extensive salvage operations. Enemy war matériel was collected and placed in unit dumps. Ammunition was either destroyed in place or moved to depots established by higher headquarters. Tanks, guns and combat



*Elements of the 94th Infantry Division pass in review*





*during the XXII Corps Victory Parade in Pilsen*





General Patton, CG of the Third Army, inspects the 301st Infantry Regiment at Strackonice



vehicles were reduced to scrap and then turned over to the Czechoslovakian National Committee, as such.

Billets acquired upon arrival in Czechoslovakia included schools, public buildings, residences, factories and fields. G-4 early laid plans to have all troops in winterized quarters by the 1st of October and work along this line was conducted all during the summer months. Sentry boxes and squad outpost quarters were constructed. Also, large numbers of stoves were procured. By an agreement with the local authorities at the end of August, all schools being used by the troops which were necessary for the reestablishment of the educational system were to be evacuated and returned. Factories capable of being put into operation were also to be vacated.

During this period, in accordance with instructions from higher headquarters, extensive training was performed. There was familiarization firing of all weapons, physical conditioning, riot duty, technical and supply procedure, and care of equipment. Extensive ceremonies were also conducted. One battalion from each of the regiments and the 94th Division Band paraded in Pilsen on the 4th of July. When General Patton visited Strakonice on the 17th of July, he was welcomed at the airport by the 94th Division Reconnaissance Troop, which had been designated as a guard of honor. Later the same day, the Army Commander inspected the training of the 376th Infantry and was guest of honor at a ceremony conducted by the 301st. Other ceremonies were conducted on the occasion of the visit of General Harmon in August, a second visit from General Patton, and on VJ-day.

Following the completion of a survey of the interests of the troops, a full-scale educational program was launched on August 7. The I&E Section ordered 25,000 text books and by the 19th of the month sixty-five per cent of the Division was enrolled in classes; each battalion had its own unit school. Toward the end of September, the program was temporarily discontinued due to loss of personnel to redeployment and the expansion of the division area.

A Division athletic program was conducted both as a part of the training schedule and to provide spectator interest for the troops. Leagues were organized in baseball, softball, football and touch football. There were also contests in archery, tennis and horseshoe pitching. On July 27, the 94th won the XXII Corps track meet at Klatovy. The Division baseball team took the corps championship, but was eliminated in the Third Army playoffs; a boxing team was formed and staged bouts twice weekly. A Division football team was also organ-



*The Division color guard passing in review in Prague during the ceremony in which the Czechoslovakian 1st Tank Brigade was officially returned to the Czech Government by Major General Ernest N. Harmon, CG of XXII Corps*





Sack time

ized and participated in a series of games with the teams of neighboring divisions.

For the men and officers of the Division the days spent in Czechoslovakia were among the best of their Army careers. There was work to be done, but leisure time was ample and the means for recreation and relaxation were readily available. However, the big question in the minds of all was: "When do we go *home*?"

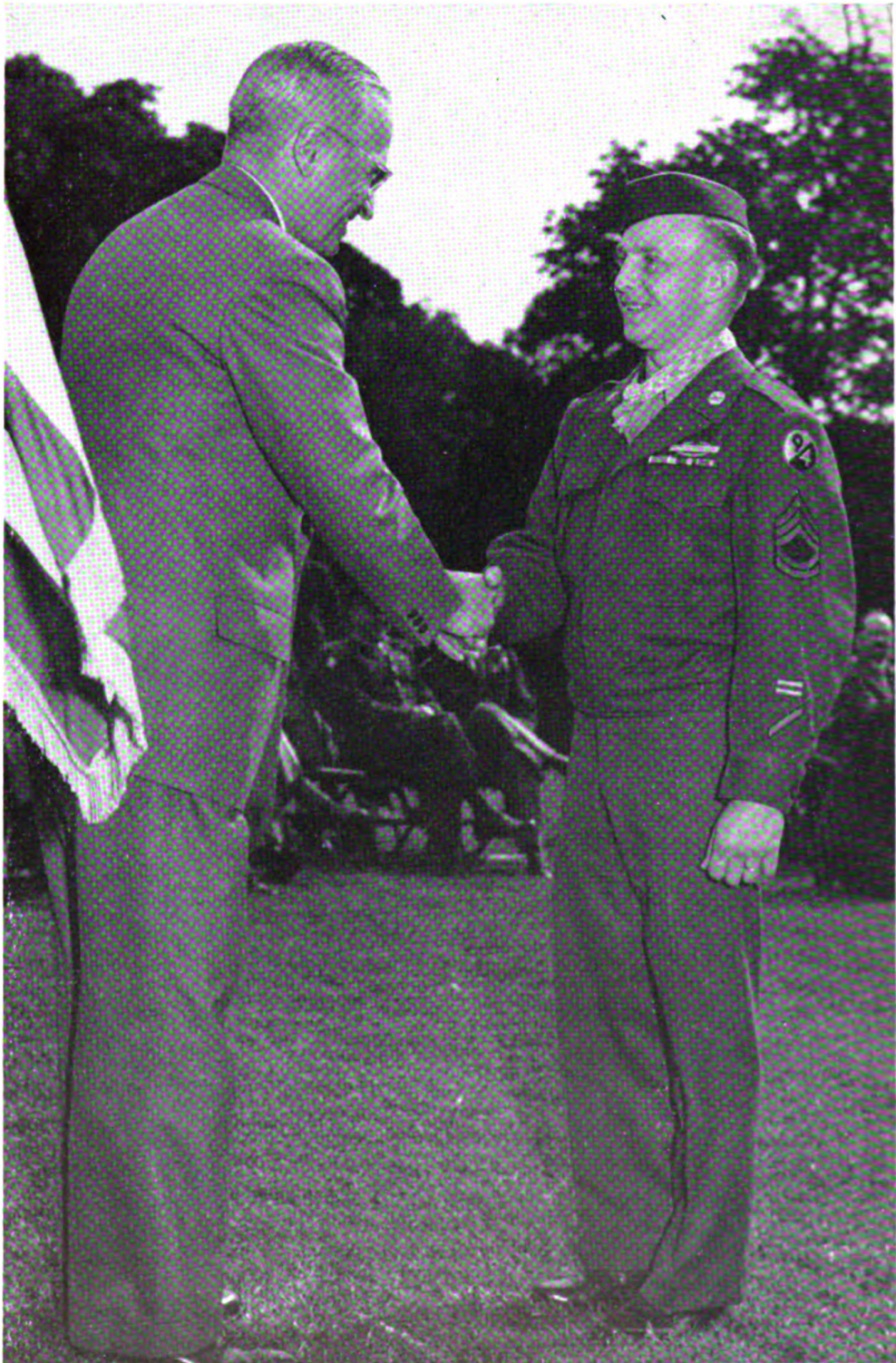
During the month of June 1945, the redeployment losses of the 94th Division were only slight. However, as the summer months came and went increasing numbers of high-point men were transferred to units soon to return to the United States. Quotas received on the 6th, 7th and 8th of September sent 2,882 men to the 8th Armored Division for redeployment. This removed all of the original cadre men who were still with the 94th. On the 10th of September, five hundred enlisted men were sent to the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, removing the last of the "filler replacements" who had joined the Division at Camp Phillips, Kansas. Later in the month there were additional transfers of high-pointers. Specialists were constantly being sent to higher headquarters and these losses at times came to two hundred men per week. As replacements, low point personnel were received from units which had been designated as carriers for the return to the States. But, the influx never equalled the losses. Thus, during the autumn and winter of 1945, the 94th Infantry Division lost its identity, as the men who had made it a great fighting outfit slipped into the

redeployment stream. There, in Czechoslovakia, the Division really disbanded as its fighting men laid down their arms and turned toward home. Months later the 94th Infantry Division was officially inactivated, unit by unit, during the period from January 29 to February 9, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

So ends the saga of a great American fighting unit. Its performance in action entitles it to an honored place in the company of those gallant divisions which, so far, America has always been able to produce when the need is great. Its former members belong to an élite body of citizens, for there were only eighty-nine divisions which carried on the ground warfare in all Theaters of Operations. On the field of battle, *E Pluribus Unum* was brought to reality by these free men—plain Americans engaged in a common and desperate undertaking—who to accomplish this had to become great soldiers. Our country's future still rests in their hands. Let us now hope that peace for all time may follow their travail and that the spirit that forged them into a single, invincible instrument may carry over into the peace to the power and glory of our American civilization.

## PART NINE

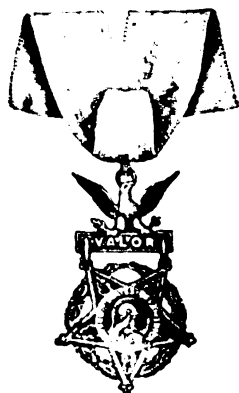
## APPENDIX



*President Truman congratulates Technical Sergeant Nicholas Oresko after presenting him with the Medal of Honor, on the White House lawn, October 12, 1945*



## DECORATIONS



### MEDAL OF HONOR

*Master Sergeant Nicholas Oresko*, (then Technical Sergeant) was platoon leader with Company C, 302d Infantry, on 23 January 1945 near Tettingen, Germany, in an attack against strong enemy positions. Deadly automatic fire from the flanks pinned down his unit. Realizing that a machine gun in a nearby bunker must be eliminated, he swiftly worked ahead alone, braving bullets which struck him, until close enough to throw a grenade into the German position. He rushed the bunker and, with point-blank rifle fire, killed all the hostile occupants who survived the grenade blast. Another machine gun opened up on him, knocking him down and seriously wounding him in the hip. Refusing to withdraw from the battle, he placed himself at the head of his platoon to continue the assault. As withering machine gun and rifle fire swept the area, he struck out alone in advance of his men to a second bunker. With a grenade, he crippled the dug-in machine gun defending this position and then wiped out the troops manning it with his rifle, completing his second self-imposed, one-man attack. Although weak from loss of blood, he refused to be evacuated until assured the mission was successfully accomplished. Through quick thinking, indomitable courage and unswerving devotion to the attack in the face of bitter resistance and while wounded, *Sergeant Oresko* killed twelve Germans, prevented a delay in the assault and made it possible for Company C to obtain its objective with minimum casualties.



Dooley, Volley R., Pfc.  
 Drenzek, Alfred, Capt.  
 Dresser, John A., Pfc.  
 Drylund, Ernest N., 2d Lt.  
 Duffy, James F., S/Sgt.  
 Dunstan, Paul M., S/Sgt. (P)  
 Durgin, James W., Cpl. (P)  
 Eberline, William A., Sgt.  
 Eckstrom, Richard S., 1st Lt.  
 Eisenmann, John L., Pfc.  
 Elbert, Theo. A., Pfc.  
 Ellis, Molton H., Pfc.  
 Epstein, Victor H., Pfc. (P)  
 Ernst, Arthur C., T/Sgt.  
 Erwin, Harold E., Pfc.  
 Evans, Tillman H., Sgt.  
 Ewasko, Anthony S., S/Sgt.  
 Finch, Jack R., S/Sgt.  
 Fink, Harry J., 1st Lt.  
 Fiordalisi, Vincent E., Pfc. (P)  
 Fischetti, Nicholas M., Capt.  
 Flanagan, Luis J., Capt.  
 Flower, James T. III, 1st Lt.  
 Fogleman, Herbert E., T/Sgt.  
 Fortunato, Patsy J., Pfc.  
 Fraboni, John R., 1st Lt.  
 Franchino, Frank A., Pfc.  
 Franklin, Charles N., Pfc. (P)  
 Frantz, Joseph R., S/Sgt.  
 Fredel, John, Sgt.  
 Freeman, Elbert R., T/Sgt.  
 Freeze, Homer H., Pfc.  
 Furness, Albert E. Jr., 2d Lt.  
 Furrier, William E., T/4  
 Gaddis, John W., Lt. Col.  
 Garza, Saragoza, Pfc.  
 Gaugler, Richard L., Pfc.  
 Gibson, George R., Pfc. (P)  
 Gilfillan, William L., Pfc. (P)  
 Goggins, Thomas H., Pfc.  
 Grant, Philip D., S/Sgt.  
 Green, Amos P., Pfc.  
 Green, Edwin A., T/3  
 Green, Howard K., Pfc.  
 Griffin, Willie D., Sgt. (P)  
 Grindstaff, Harry I., T/Sgt.  
 Gronfield, Milo C., Pfc.  
 Grosso, Angelo S., S/Sgt.  
 Guerrieri, James, Sgt.  
 Gyrion, Charles A., Sgt.  
 Hager, Carl W., S/Sgt.  
 Halcomb, Willmer, S/Sgt.  
 Hamby, Jack E., Sgt.  
 Hamilton, Harry C., S/Sgt.  
 Hamilton, Virgil E., Pfc.  
 Hansen, Bill C., Sgt.  
 Harden, Kermit L. Jr., Pfc.  
 Hardin, Donald C., Lt. Col.  
 Harding, Fred, S/Sgt. (P)  
 Harding, Russell E., Capt. (Chaplain)

Hardy, Logan C., Pfc.  
 Harmon, Carl E., Pfc.  
 Harmon, Verlin R., T/4  
 Harshman, Clifton T., Sgt.  
 Haskins, Walter B., S/Sgt. (P)  
 Havrilla, George Jr., Pfc.  
 Hayes, Andrew Jr., Pfc.  
 Heck, Bernie H., Cpl.  
 Heidelberger, Perry Jr., 1st Lt. (OLC)\*  
 Helms, Eugene F., S/Sgt.  
 Henry, Oscar F. Jr., 2d Lt. (P)  
 Hepler, Garfield W., Pfc.  
 Heppel, Herman R., T/4  
 Hereth, Edward W., T/Sgt.  
 Hestand, Lewis E., S/Sgt.  
 Hevener, William K., Sgt.  
 Hickey, David J., 2d Lt.  
 Hill, Ernest J., T/4  
 Hill, Paul H., Sgt.  
 Hodges, Arthur W., Lt. Col.  
 Hodges, Jesse W., 1st Lt.  
 Hogsett, Samuel L., S/Sgt.  
 Hopper, Charles C., Pfc.  
 Hubbard, Warren C., 1st Lt.  
 Hughes, Howard E., Sgt.  
 Hughes, James C., S/Sgt.  
 Hullender, James C., T/Sgt.  
 Humphrey, Jack W., 1st Lt.  
 Huneycutt, Clair, Pfc. (P)  
 Hutchinson, James L., Pfc.  
 Inglis, Robert L., T/5  
 Ingram, Vander I., Sgt.  
 Isaacman, Nathaniel, T/Sgt.  
 Ittner, William R., T/5  
 Ives, Alden A., S/Sgt.  
 Jensen, Alton P., Pfc.  
 Johnson, Earle A., Col.  
 Johnson, Leon P., 1st Lt.  
 Johnson, Robert H., T/Sgt.  
 Jones, Charles F. Jr., Sgt.  
 Jones, Wade D., Capt.  
 Kahle, John C., T/4 (P)  
 Kamins, Richard J., Pfc.  
 Kapela, Anthony J., Pvt.  
 Karker, Maurice E., S/Sgt.  
 Karlak, John M., 1st Lt.  
 Katz, Seigfried, Pfc.  
 Kaufmann, Elmer A., 1st Lt.  
 Kearns, Kenneth E., 2d Lt.  
 Keele, Kenneth C., Sgt.  
 Kelley, Eugene L., Pfc.  
 Kelley, Francis E., T/Sgt.  
 Kelly, James M., Pfc.  
 Ketner, Ray, S/Sgt.  
 Kinatader, Elmer, T/Sgt.  
 Kinder, Okley, S/Sgt.  
 King, William L., Sgt.  
 Kinzel, John C., S/Sgt.  
 Kline, Frederick C., T/Sgt.  
 Kohrs, Sel J., 2d Lt.

\* (OLC) Oak leaf cluster

Konkol, Anthony J., T/Sgt.  
 Kops, Herman Jr., Capt.  
 Krah, Frank F. Jr., 2d Lt.  
 Kreger, Donald W., S/Sgt. (OLC)  
 Kroncke, Werner G., Pfc.  
 Kulicki, Milton M., 1st Sgt.  
 Kusek, Bruno J., Pfc.  
 Kutin, Irving, Pvt.  
 Lake, John L., Sgt.  
 Lakin, Edson A., Pfc.  
 Lamp, Edward W., Pfc.  
 Land, William G., 1st Lt.  
 Lane, Frank O., T/5  
 Leach, Duncan N. Jr., Sgt.  
 Leavel, Vallie P. Jr., Cpl.  
 Lee, James W., T/Sgt.  
 Leifer, Milton, Sgt.  
 Levi, Albert, Pfc.  
 Levin, Marvin H., S/Sgt.  
 Lewies, Harry J., 1st Lt.  
 Lewis, Clyde L. Sr., S/Sgt.  
 Lillich, Earl C., Pfc.  
 Lindekugel, Gerold R., S/Sgt.  
 Lobaugh, Frank E. Jr., Pfc.  
 Lofblad, Hjalmar L., S/Sgt. (P)  
 Long, Flaud E., S/Sgt.  
 Luckey, Beverly A., Pfc.  
 Luikart, David L., S/Sgt.  
 Lund, Robert T., Pfc.  
 Lyne, John J., Pfc.  
 Macejak, Edward J., S/Sgt.  
 Mackey, Edward S., Sgt.  
 MacLachlan, Donald S., Pfc.  
 Macon, Wilford, Pfc.  
 Macumber, Clifford R., Pvt. (P)  
 Maggetti, James A., Sgt.  
 Magnuson, Melvin C., S/Sgt.  
 Mahlstedt, Gerald J., Pfc.  
 Mahoney, William R., 1st Lt.  
 Maisto, Vincent J., T/Sgt.  
 Maixner, Harold V., Lt. Col.  
 Malony, Harry J., Maj. Gen.  
 Manas, James T., Pvt.  
 Markus, Walther P., Pfc.  
 Marr, Lester V., 1st Sgt.<sup>4</sup>  
 Martin, Olivius C. Jr., Lt. Col. (OLC)  
 Martinez, Edward, Pfc.  
 Mason, Stanley C., 2d Lt.  
 Massey, Oris D., Cpl.  
 Matsuzawa, Ichiro, S/Sgt.  
 Mauck, Donn R., Pvt.  
 McBride, William E., Maj.  
 McClune, Harold H., Col.  
 McCollum, Leslie L., Pfc.  
 McCollum, William W., Pvt.  
 McConnell, Max E., S/Sgt.  
 McCormack, Weldon J., Pfc.  
 McCoy, Furman B, T/5  
 McCoy, Warren J., Capt.  
 McDaniel, Harold E., Pvt. (P)  
 McDonnell, Thomas B., T/5  
 McFadden, Harold E., Sgt.  
 McGuigon, Frederick O., Pfc.  
 McIntyre, John L., T/Sgt.  
 McKee, Howard W., Capt.  
 McLemore, Tally W., S/Sgt.  
 McNulty, William A., Lt. Col.  
 McPherson, Leroy, S/Sgt. (P)  
 Meneses, James E., Sgt. (OLC)  
 Messer, Denzle W., Pfc.  
 Meyer, Leland A., 1st Lt.  
 Meyers, Earl L., Lt. Col.  
 Mick, Dewey F., Sgt.  
 Miller, George F., Lt. Col. (P)  
 Miner, Russell M., Lt. Col. (OLC)  
 Mingin, Townsend F., T/4  
 Minnich, Samuel T., Capt.  
 Misner, Charles C., 1st Lt.  
 Mitchell, John G., Sgt.  
 Mitchell, Nedwood N., Pfc.  
 Modeski, Thomas, Pfc.  
 Montgomery, George E., 2d Lt.  
 Moon, William R., S/Sgt.  
 Morgan, Earl L., T/5  
 Morrison, Clifford O., 1st Lt.  
 Morse, Dwight M., 1st Lt.  
 Mousaw, Earle T., Pfc.  
 Munroe, Robert A., T/5 (P)  
 Nance, Horace A., Sgt.  
 Narewski, John F., 1st Lt.  
 Neff, Leonard L., Pfc. (P)  
 Nicholas, Joseph M., Pfc.  
 Norquest, Samuel G., 1st Lt.  
 Norrell, Glen R., Pfc. (P)  
 Null, Stanton H., Pvt. (P)  
 Offret, Thomas L., T/5  
 O'Hara, Frank A., T/Sgt. (P)  
 Opsahl, Harry E., 1st Lt.  
 Orr, Isaac W., T/Sgt.  
 Page, Julius A., S/Sgt.  
 Panes, Jack S., Sgt.  
 Panyard, Virgil C., Pfc.  
 Parkinson, Tom R., T/Sgt.  
 Parrish, Robert V., S/Sgt.  
 Paulson, Donald R., Pfc.  
 Paveletzke, Joseph B. Jr., S/Sgt.  
 Peckham, Malcolm C., 2d Lt.  
 Penn, Frank A., 1st Lt.  
 Penno, Paul E., Pfc.  
 Peppers, Lawrence E., T/4  
 Petri, Michael, T/5  
 Petry, Arnold A., T/Sgt.  
 Pflueger, Paul E., Sgt.  
 Pietrzak, John F., Pfc.  
 Pilleskey, William B., T/5  
 Pillion, W. T., S/Sgt.  
 Pleasanton, William C. Pfc.  
 Pontecorvo, Donald A., S/Sgt.  
 Popken, Kenneth N., Sgt.  
 Porche, Ralph W., Pfc.

<sup>4</sup>For service with the 8th Armored Division

Porter, James M., 1st Lt.  
 Poynter, Harry K., 2d Lt.  
 Presley, Charles L., Sgt.  
 Privette, Vernon L., Pfc.  
 Quick, Glenn S., Pvt.  
 Raffel, Arthur G., Sgt. (P)  
 Raley, William T., T/5  
 Ramsey, Clarence E., T/Sgt.  
 Rao, Anthony S., Sgt.  
 Ratliff, Floyd L., Pfc.  
 Ray, David T., Pfc.  
 Rayman, Martin, 2d Lt.  
 Reabold, Willard M., Pfc. (P)  
 Reed, Thomas W., Sgt.  
 Regan, Edward P., T/Sgt.  
 Reichley, Ralph J., T/Sgt.  
 Reingart, Robert R., T/Sgt.  
 Rencavage, Joseph, Sgt.  
 Rhea, Harold L., Pfc.  
 Richardson, Donald J., Sgt.  
 Riddell, Everett A., Sgt.  
 Rives, Howard P., 1st Lt.  
 Robinson, Colen C., 1st Lt.  
 Rocheleau, Russel W., Pvt.  
 Roemer, Theodore J., Cpl.  
 Roher, Adolph, Pfc.  
 Romaniuk, Roman W., T/5  
 Rost, Neon V., Pfc.  
 Royajy, Henry, S/Sgt. (P)  
 Roza, Joseph E., Pfc.  
 Runde, Orlin H., Capt.  
 St. Aubin, Milton L., Pfc.  
 Samarin, Peter R., S/Sgt.  
 Samoyendny, John, T/Sgt.  
 Sanborn, Lee J., T/5  
 Sanoden, Russell C., Pfc.  
 Satterfield, Robert B., Pfc.  
 Scales, Knox L., 1st Lt. (P)  
 Scarborough, Paul G., Pfc. (P)  
 Scheller, Elmer W., Pfc.  
 Schettig, Rex S., T/Sgt.  
 Schettino, Joseph D., Pfc.  
 Schmidt, Harry T., S/Sgt.  
 Schulte, Earl F., Pfc.  
 Schulze, Carl G., S/Sgt.  
 Schwartz, Seymour, Pfc. (P)  
 Schwerzer, Raymond A., S/Sgt.  
 Scopoli, Mariano, T/Sgt.  
 Seigenthaler, Walter L., Sgt.  
 Seith, Leonard E., S/Sgt.  
 Seymour, Russell M., Pfc.  
 Shetler, Carl J., Capt. (P)  
 Shirley, Rawland, S/Sgt.  
 Shocksnyder, Arthur A., 1st Lt.  
 Simerl, Rex, Sgt.  
 Simpkins, Adrian A., S/Sgt.  
 Simuro, Bernard F., 1st Lt.  
 Sinclair, Charles A., Capt. (P)  
 Smith, Charles L., 1st Lt.  
 Smith, John N., Capt.  
 Smith, Nelson W., S/Sgt.

Sparling, James L., S/Sgt.  
 Spencer, Ernest A. Jr., T/3  
 Sprague, Kendall L., Pfc.  
 Stallard, Marvin L., S/Sgt.  
 Standish, Frederick D. II, Capt.  
 Steinmeier, William R., Capt. (Chaplain)  
 Stephens, Noah, Pvt.  
 Stough, Clyde A., Sgt.  
 Straka, John, S/Sgt.  
 Strasburg, Dudley S., Pfc.  
 Stucklak, Alex, S/Sgt.  
 Sullivan, Roy W., S/Sgt.  
 Summers, Lloyd T., T/5  
 Swart, Frederick I., Sgt.  
 Sweazey, Jessie I., Pvt.  
 Tamminen, Armin, Pfc.  
 Tanner, Harold H., T/4  
 Taylor, Robert J., Sgt.  
 Teller, Theron H., Sgt.  
 Templeton, Estle E., S/Sgt.  
 Thompson, Robert R., S/Sgt.  
 Thurston, Benjamin E., Lt. Col.  
 Traweek, Robert L., S/Sgt.  
 Triplett, Earl H., S/Sgt.  
 Trumblay, Richard G., Pvt. (P)  
 Vance, Willard A., Pfc.  
 Van Horn, Elwood E., Pvt.  
 Vena, Anthony J., Sgt.  
 Vinograd, David, Pvt. (P)  
 Vinje, Robert L., 1st Lt.  
 Vosburg, Dean S., S/Sgt.  
 Vulgamore, Earl N., T/5  
 Wakser, Albert, Pfc.  
 Walters, Glenn E., Pfc.  
 Ward, Harry F., S/Sgt.  
 Warren, Harold G., Pfc.  
 Watson, Roy G., S/Sgt. (P)  
 Way, Julian M., Capt.  
 Weakley, Jack B., Pfc.  
 Weeks, Stephen D., Pvt.  
 Weissich, Theodor E., 1st Lt. (P)  
 Wells, Earnie W., Sgt.  
 Whiteaker, Bernard C., T/5  
 Whorton, Louis S. Jr., Sgt.  
 Wichic, Michael, S/Sgt. (P)  
 Wilcox, Charles L., Pvt.  
 Wilder, Henry, S/Sgt.  
 Wiley, Kenneth M., Pfc. (P)  
 Williams, Richard E., Pvt.  
 Williamson, Ralph V., T/5  
 Willis, Enoch P., S/Sgt.  
 Wilson, Charles O., Sgt.  
 Wilson, John A., Capt.  
 Wilson, Thomas C., S/Sgt. (OLC)  
 Woods, Edward J., Pfc.  
 Woolman, Wayne W., Pfc.  
 Yoder, Martin L., Pfc.  
 Youshock, Paul, T/Sgt.  
 Zachary, Stanley F., T/5  
 Zebin, Jack, Pfc.

## LEGION OF MERIT

Bergquist, Earl C., Col.  
 Ellis, Noel H., Lt. Col.  
 Durbin, Rollin B., Lt. Col.  
 Gaddis, John W., Lt. Col.  
 Fortier, Louis J., Brig. Gen.

Hagerty, Roy N., Col.  
 Johnson, Earle A., Col.  
 McNulty, William A., Lt. Col.  
 Patterson, William H., Lt. Col.  
 Ray, John E., Col.  
 Surrell, M. A. Jr., Lt. Col.

## SOLDIER'S MEDAL

Black, William E., T/4  
 Brown, Roy, Pfc.  
 Brownlee, Loren E., Pfc.  
 Dupell, Robert J., Pfc.  
 Ginsburg, Edward M., Major  
 Hendrix, Arthur E., S/Sgt.  
 Kablesh, Harry, Pfc.  
 Kuzma, Joseph E., S/Sgt.  
 Maiolie, Frank, Sgt.

Mayers, Albert N., Major  
 McGeehan, Vincent J. Jr., Sgt.  
 Mendrick, Joseph R., S/Sgt.  
 Mikesch, Edward A., Pvt.  
 O'Brien, John G., Sgt.  
 Seaman, Charles P., Pfc.  
 Shepard, Leslie A., Sgt.  
 Sherrod, Charles A., 1st Lt.  
 Tauber, Edward F., T/5  
 Thanos, Daniel L., Pfc.

## BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Lack of space precludes the listing by name of the many awards of the Bronze Star Medal to members of the 94th Division. In addition to those persons who were awarded the Bronze Star in published orders of various units, those individuals who, as members of the armed forces of the United States, were cited by name on or after 7 December 1941 and prior to 3 September 1945, in orders or in a formal certificate, for meritorious or exemplary conduct in ground combat against the armed enemy, may make application to The Adjutant General, Department of the Army, Washington 25, D.C., for award of the Bronze Star Medal on the basis of such citation. A citation in orders for the Combat Infantryman Badge or Medical Badge awarded in the field during the period of actual combat against the armed enemy is considered as a citation for exemplary conduct in ground combat. These citations in orders during the period 7 December 1941 through 2 September 1945 were not automatic, but were based upon recommendations of unit commanders thoroughly familiar with the achievement of the individuals cited and after a careful evaluation of their work. [Authority for this paragraph is Change 13 to AR 600-45, Department of the Army, 4 November 1947.]

## September 10, 1944 to December 31, 1945

Medal of Honor .....	1
Distinguished Service Cross .....	20
Distinguished Service Medal .....	3
Silver Star Medal .....	439
Legion of Merit .....	11
Soldier's Medal .....	19
Bronze Star Medal (From Unit Orders) .....	2671
Air Medal .....	77



## BATTLE HONORS

GENERAL ORDERS  
NO. 2

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Washington 25, D.C., 5 January 1946

**BATTLE HONORS.** As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superceding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citation of the following unit in the general orders indicated is confirmed under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The *1st Battalion, 376th Infantry Regiment*, is cited for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action in Germany, during the period 14 January to 18 January 1945. The *1st Battalion, 376th Infantry Regiment*, was ordered to capture the towns of Tettingen and Butzdorf and thereby breach the Siegfried Line Switch of fortifications protecting the Saar-Moselle Triangle. Employing lightning-like tactics and surprise, the objectives were captured with light casualties, and strong defenses were set up. At approximately 0300 on 15 January, the enemy launched the first of a series of counter-attacks when 400 enemy infantrymen swarmed down the hills and surrounded the towns in a desperate effort to regain the vital ground. The Germans were driven back after sustaining staggering casualties. Seven more determined attacks by numerically superior forces were repulsed in a like manner. Carrying parties braved intense artillery, mortar, and sniper fire to bring up ammunition and medical supplies. To deceive the enemy as to the true strength of our forces, the gallant defenders maneuvered rapidly from house to house through holes blasted in the sides of buildings with satchel charges and bazookas, all the time directing heavy fire upon the Germans. At one time, 35 enemy tanks were counted in the streets of the two towns, but the men of the *1st Battalion*, disregarding point-blank fire from the tanks and despite these overwhelming odds, courageously resisted and repelled every attack. In spite of heavy casualties and the fact that the men occupied front-line positions for 5 days without sleep, they bitterly contested every foot of ground, tenaciously held the positions, killed approximately 850 Germans and captured 150, and destroyed 8 tanks and 11 half-tracks. The unconquerable spirit displayed by these men in the face of superior odds, and their self-sacrificing devotion to duty are worthy of the highest emulation. [General Orders 255, Headquarters 94th Infantry Division, 29 September 1945, as approved by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces, European Theater (Main).]

# ANTECEDENT HISTORY OF THE 94TH DIVISION

## 94TH DIVISION

This division was authorized to be organized in Puerto Rico during World War I, but cessation of hostilities in 1918 cancelled plans for activation. The division remained on paper until 1921 when it was constituted as an Organized Reserve unit. It was named the "Pilgrim Division" and had for its original shoulder sleeve insignia the silhouette of a Pilgrim bearing a blunderbuss at right-shoulder-arms. This insignia was redesigned when the division was activated in World War II since the New England identity had been lost.

## DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, under command of Major General Harry J. Malony.

## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, with Major John W. Keating as Division Headquarters Commandant.

## MILITARY POLICE PLATOON

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, with Major Pressley M. Seay, Jr., as Division Provost Marshal.

## 94TH RECONNAISSANCE TROOP

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, under command of Lieutenant Colonel (then Captain) William H. Patterson.

## 94TH SIGNAL COMPANY

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, with Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Albert B. Turner, Jr., as Division Signal Officer.

## 301ST INFANTRY

Motto: *From This Center Liberty Sprang*. This regiment was organized as part of the 76th Division at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, on August 30, 1917. Its personnel were drawn from the city of Boston and its suburbs. The regiment sailed for France on July 6, 1918, landing at Le Havre. Here it entrained for the St. Armand Sector in the valley of the Cher River where it served as a part of the 76th Depot Division. Although the regiment saw no action as a unit, its personnel were transferred to other organizations on the fighting front. It is entitled to a streamer without inscription, in the colors of the Victory Ribbon. At the end of World War I the regiment was returned to the United States and demobilized at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. In 1921 it was reconstituted under the provisions of the National Defense Act and assigned to the 94th Division, Organized Reserves. It served in this status until September 15, 1942 when it was reactivated at Fort Custer, Michigan with Colonel Roy N. Hagerty commanding.

### 302D INFANTRY

Motto: *The Command is Forward.* This regiment was organized in September 1917 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, as part of the 76th Division. In July 1918 it sailed for France, landing at Bordeaux in August. Like the 301st Infantry, this regiment saw no active service in World War I. It functioned as a replacement unit and is entitled to a streamer without inscription, in the colors of the Victory Ribbon. At the termination of hostilities the regiment returned to the United States and was demobilized at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, in 1919. On June 24, 1921, the 302d Infantry was reconstituted and assigned to the 94th Division, Organized Reserves. It served in this status until September 15, 1942 when it was reactivated at Fort Custer, Michigan under the command of Colonel Earle A. Johnson.

### 376TH INFANTRY

Motto: *Don't Tread On Me.* This regiment was organized during World War I at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, but saw no overseas service. In September 1921, the 376th Infantry was assigned to the 94th Division, Organized Reserves. Twenty-one years later, at Fort Custer, Michigan, on September 15, 1942, it was officially activated with Colonel Maximilian Clay commanding.

### HEADQUARTERS, 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION ARTILLERY

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942, under command of Brigadier General Louis J. Fortier.

### HEADQUARTERS BATTERY, 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION ARTILLERY

No antecedent history. Activated at Fort Custer, Michigan, September 15, 1942.

### 301ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Motto: *Stand Your Ground.* This unit was organized in 1917 as the 301st Field Artillery Regiment and assigned to the 76th Division with whom it served in France during World War I. Although the unit saw no combat, it is entitled to a streamer without inscription, in the colors of the Victory Ribbon. The regiment was demobilized after the termination of World War I. On November 19, 1921, it was reconstituted and assigned to the 94th Division, Organized Reserves. Redesignated the 301st Field Artillery Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, it was reactivated on September 15, 1942 at Fort Custer, Michigan, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel L. Morrow, Jr.

### 356TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Motto: *Integritas, Animas, Industria.* This organization was constituted as a unit of the 94th Division, Organized Reserves, in November 1921. Redesignated the 356th Field Artillery Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, it was activated on September 15, 1942, at Fort Custer, Michigan with Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Whiteley commanding.

## THE 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION

## 390TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Motto: *Steadfast*. In 1921 this unit was constituted as the 390th Field Artillery Regiment of the Organized Reserves. It was redesignated the 390th Field Artillery Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, and activated on September 15, 1942 at Fort Custer, Michigan, with Lieutenant Colonel Robert G. Crandall commanding.

## 919TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Motto: *We Fight With Fire*. This unit was constituted in 1921 as the 319th Ammunition Train. It was redesignated the 919th Field Artillery Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, and activated on September 15, 1942, at Fort Custer, Michigan, with Lieutenant Colonel James M. Caviness commanding.

## 319TH ENGINEER BATTALION

Motto: *Semi Circum Orbe*. This unit was organized at Camp Frémont, California, in 1918 from a nucleus of four officers and eighty-five enlisted men from the 3d Engineers then stationed in Hawaii. The unit did not serve overseas and was demobilized after World War I. The 319th Engineers was reconstituted in 1921 and assigned to the Organized Reserves. After being redesignated the 319th Engineer Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, the unit was reactivated on September 15, 1942 at Fort Custer, Michigan with Lieutenant Colonel Keith Barney commanding.

## 319TH MEDICAL BATTALION

Motto: *Prodesse Quam Conspici*. This unit was organized in 1921 as the 319th Medical Regiment of the Organized Reserves. Pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, it was redesignated the 319th Medical Battalion and activated on September 15, 1942, at Fort Custer, Michigan, with Lieutenant Colonel Richard P. Johnson commanding.

## 94TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

This unit was originally designated the 419th Quartermaster Regiment and assigned to the Organized Reserves in 1921. It was next redesignated the 419th Quartermaster Battalion, pursuant to War Department Letter AG 320.2, dated January 30, 1942, and activated on September 15, 1942, at Fort Custer, Michigan, with Lieutenant Colonel Paul G. Kendall as Division Quartermaster. Subsequently, the unit was redesignated the 94th Quartermaster Company.

## 794TH ORDNANCE COMPANY

No antecedent history. Pursuant to General Order No. 6, Headquarters 94th Infantry Division, Fort Custer, Michigan, dated October 1, 1942, the Ordnance Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 419th Quartermaster Battalion was reorganized as the 794th Ordnance Light Maintenance Company with Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Percival C. Wooters as Division Ordnance Officer.

## DIVISION COMMAND POSTS

### 94TH INFANTRY DIVISION (FORWARD)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Time</i>
Chippenham, England	13 Aug—3 Sept 44
En route to France	3 Sept—8 Sept 44
St. Marie-du-Mont, France	8 Sept—9 Sept 44
Plouay, France	9 Sept—22 Sept 44
Châteaubriant, France	22 Sept—1 Jan 45
En route to Western Front—stops made at LeMans, Rambouillet and Reims, France	1 Jan—6 Jan 45
Veckring, France	6 Jan—23 Jan 45
Sierck-les-Bains, France	23 Jan—22 Feb 45
Fruedenburg, Germany	22 Feb—27 Feb 45
Saarburg, Germany	27 Feb—16 Mar 45
Berg-Heid, Germany	16 Mar—17 Mar 45
Hermeskeil, Germany	17 Mar—18 Mar 45
Birkenfeld, Germany	18 Mar—19 Mar 45
Baumholder, Germany	19 Mar—20 Mar 45
Otterberg, Germany	20 Mar—21 Mar 45
Grunstadt, Germany	21 Mar—25 Mar 45
(Advance CP at Oggersheim)	23 Mar—24 Mar 45
Baumholder, Germany	25 Mar—31 Mar 45
Willich, Germany	31 Mar—1 Apr 45
Krefeld, Germany	1 Apr—25 Apr 45
Düsseldorf, Germany	25 Apr—7 Jun 45
Susice, Czechoslovakia	7 Jun—21 July 45
Prachatice, Czechoslovakia	21 July—

## DIVISION ASSIGNMENTS

<i>Theater</i>	<i>Army Group</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Corps</i>	<i>Date</i>
ETOUSA	—	9th	—	11 July 44
ETOUSA	—	9th	XIII	27 July 44
ETOUSA	12th	9th	XIII	28 Aug 44
ETOUSA	12th	9th	—	23 Sept 44
ETOUSA	12th	—	—	9 Oct 44
ETOUSA	12th	3d	XX	6 Jan 45
ETOUSA	12th	15th	XXII	29 Mar 45
ETOUSA	12th	3d	XXII	15 Jun 45

## ATTACHMENTS

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Date Attached</i>	<i>Date Relieved</i>
Co F 86 Cav Rcn Sq (6th Armd Div)	17 Sept 44	15 Oct 44
473 AAA AW (SP)	17 Sept 44	27 Nov 44
15 Cav Gp Hq & Hq Tr	22 Sept 44	4 Jan 45
15 Cav Rcn Sq	22 Sept 44	4 Jan 45
199 FA Bn	22 Sept 44	4 Jan 45
688 FA Bn	23 Sept 44	4 Jan 45
256 FA Bn	23 Sept 44	7 Oct 44
12 FA Obsn Bn	23 Sept 44	12 Oct 44
667 QM Truck Co	1 Oct 44	4 Jan 45
4th Plat 15 Spec Serv Co	15 Oct 44	13 Dec 44
101st Cav Gp Hq & Hq Tr <sup>1</sup>	4 Dec 44	4 Jan 45
101st Cav Rcn Sq <sup>1</sup>	4 Dec 44	4 Jan 45
116th Cav Rcn Sq <sup>1</sup>	4 Dec 44	4 Jan 45
3d Cav Gp	7 Jan 45	23 Jan 45
3d Cav Sq	7 Jan 45	23 Jan 45
43 Cav Sq	7 Jan 45	23 Jan 45
241 FA Bn	7 Jan 45	23 Jan 45
774 TD Bn	7 Jan 45	
465 AAA AW Bn	7 Jan 45	12 Jun 45

<sup>1</sup>These Units did not actively participate with the Division.



## DIVISION ATTACHMENTS

517

Co B 81 Cml Mort Bn Mtz	7 Jan 45	24 Mar 45
Co C 81 Cml Mort Bn Mtz	7 Jan 45	3 Mar 45
Co B 607 TD Bn	7 Jan 45	21 Jan 45
Co A 607 TD Bn	21 Jan 45	23 Jan 45
Co A 748 Tk Bn (Reinf)	16 Jan 45	25 Jan 45
Combat Command A 8th Armd Div	19 Jan 45	28 Jan 45
162 Cml Co (SG)	21 Jan 45	30 Jan 45
704 TD Bn	23 Jan 45	4 Mar 45
Co D 748 Tk Bn	25 Jan 45	29 Jan 45
Co C 748 Tk Bn	25 Jan 45	29 Jan 45
Co B 748 Tk Bn	29 Jan 45	21 Feb 45
5th Ranger Bn	9 Feb 45	11 Mar 45
778 Tk Bn (less Co B)	16 Feb 45	19 Mar 45
778 Tk Bn (less Co B)	23 Mar 45	24 Mar 45
3d Bn 101 Inf (26th Inf Div)	23 Feb 45	24 Feb 45
81st Cml Co (SG)	22 Feb 45	9 Mar 45
1258 Engr (C) Bn	24 Feb 45	27 Feb 45
3d Cav Gp	27 Feb 45	9 Mar 45
691 TD Bn	0900 4 Mar 45	1200 4 Mar 45
Co A 818 TD Bn	4 Mar 45	9 Mar 45
241 FA Bn (Atchd to 3d Cav Gp)	5 Mar 45	9 Mar 45
Combat Command A 12th Armd Div	23 Mar 45	24 Mar 45
535 FA Bn	18 Apr 45	25 Apr 45
747 FA Bn	18 Apr 45	25 Apr 45
940 FA Bn	18 Apr 45	25 Apr 45
1st Bn 13 Regt (Netherlands Army)	18 Apr 45	25 Apr 45
1st Bn 1st Regt Limburg (Netherlands Army)	7 Apr 45	18 May 45

# REDEPLOYMENT INFORMATION AND INACTIVATION DATES

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Departed Le Harve</i>	<i>Ship</i>	<i>Inactivated</i>
Div Hq & Hq Company	23 Jan 1946	Rockhill Victory	9 Feb 1946
Military Police Platoon	23 Jan 1946	Rockhill Victory	7 Feb 1946
94th Rcn Troop	26 Jan 1946	Pontotoc Victory	6 Feb 1946
94th Sig Company	24 Jan 1946	Zanesville Victory	6 Feb 1946
301st Infantry	18 Jan 1946	Thomas Barry	4 Feb 1946
301st Infantry	23 Jan 1946	Rockhill Victory	4 Feb 1946
302d Infantry	20 Jan 1946	Westminster	30 Jan 1946
376th Infantry	18 Jan 1946	Thomas Barry	29 Jan 1946
376th Infantry	21 Jan 1946	Mulhenburg	29 Jan 1946
Arty Hq & Hq Battery	23 Jan 1946	Rockhill Victory	3 Feb 1946
301st FA Battalion	23 Jan 1946	Rockhill Victory	3 Feb 1946
356th FA Battalion	27 Jan 1946	Antioch Victory	8 Feb 1946
919th FA Battalion	27 Jan 1946	Lehigh Victory	9 Feb 1946
390th FA Battalion	24 Jan 1946	Zanesville Victory	6 Feb 1946
319th Engr Battalion	26 Jan 1946	Chapel Hill	7 Feb 1946
319th Engr Battalion	27 Jan 1946	Lehigh Victory	7 Feb 1946
319th Med Battalion	26 Jan 1946	Chapel Hill	7 Feb 1946
94th QM Company	24 Jan 1946	Zanesville Victory	6 Feb 1946
794th Ord Company	24 Jan 1946	Zanesville Victory	6 Feb 1946

## THE COMMANDERS

### MAJOR GENERAL HARRY J. MALONY DIVISION COMMANDER

(Sept. 15, 1942 - May 21, 1945)

Born at Lakemont, New York, August 24, 1889. Attended Yale University from 1907 to 1908. Entered United States Military Academy in 1908 and graduated in 1912. Served with the 10th Infantry Regiment in the Panama Canal Zone from 1912 to 1915. Transferred to the 3d Field Artillery in 1916 and was stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Sent to France in September 1917 and took charge of aircraft armament for the AEF. Received the Distinguished Service Medal and the Ordre d'Etoile Noire from the United States and France, respectively, for service in World War I. In 1920 assumed command of the Savanna Proving Ground. For the following four years, Secretary and faculty member of the Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Graduated Command and General Staff School in 1926. Detailed to the General Staff the following year and stationed in Atlanta, Georgia, until 1931. Served as Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Oklahoma University from 1931 to 1935. Graduated Army War College in 1936. Member of the Field Artillery Board, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 1937. Following this, returned to Army War College as instructor in G-4 Section until its close in 1940. Became member of the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff and in conjunction with a small group of faculty drew plans leading to the acquisition of Atlantic Bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Caribbean and the Guianas. Became a member of the Greenslade-Devers Board and spent several months in reconnoitering sites and bases to be acquired under the destroyers-for-bases deal with Great Britain. Upon completion of this assignment returned to Washington and was appointed a member of the President's Base Lease Commission. Proceeded to London and participated in negotiating an agreement with British as to the conditions of the occupation of the newly acquired bases. Promoted to brigadier general in London. Returned to Washington and for several weeks was G-3 of the War Department. Became temporary head of the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff. Following this was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff for Planning at GHQ under General McNair and placed in direct charge of drawing Theater of Operations plans. Upon reorganization of the War Department in March 1942, by direction of the President assigned to the Munitions Assignment Board in the Combined Chiefs of Staff organization under the Chairmanship of Mr. Harry Hopkins. In June 1942 assigned to command the 94th Infantry Division scheduled for activation in September and promoted to major general. *Decorations:* Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Silver Star; Bronze Star Medal; Commendation Ribbon with Oak Leaf Cluster; Ordre d'Etoile Noire, France; Legion of Honor, France; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France.

MAJOR GENERAL ALLISON J. BARNETT  
DIVISION COMMANDER

(Aug. 1, 1945 - Feb. 9, 1946)

Born in Kentucky April 2, 1892. Attended Vanderbilt Training School, Hartford College and the University of Kentucky. Enlisted in the Kentucky National Guard in 1907; discharged in 1913 as a sergeant. Following the declaration of war, enlisted in the 3d Kentucky Infantry. Commissioned a captain (temporary) in May 1917. Sailed for France in September 1918. Joined the 39th Infantry, 4th Division as a company commander. Returned to the United States in September 1919 as S-3 of the 39th Infantry. Moved with this unit to Camp Dodge, Iowa. Commissioned a First Lieutenant, Infantry, Regular Army, July 1, 1920. Graduated from The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, June 1921. Reassigned to the 39th Infantry, Camp Lewis, Washington; detailed S-3. Upon the inactivation of the 4th Division, of which the 39th Infantry was a part, assigned as S-3, 4th Infantry Regiment. Transferred to Headquarters 5th Infantry Brigade; detailed Brigade, S-3, in March 1922. With that headquarters, moved to Vancouver Barracks, Washington, in September 1922. Assigned to The Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as a student, in September 1923; graduated the following June. Transferred to the 29th Infantry, Fort Benning, Georgia, and assumed command of its Howitzer Company. Detailed to the Department of Experiment, The Infantry School, serving there until 1928. In October of that year joined the 57th Infantry at Fort William McKinley, Philippine Islands. Returning to the United States, served with the 34th Infantry, Fort Eustis, Virginia, from November 1930 to June 1931. Attended the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, graduating in June 1933. Graduated from the Air Corps Tactical School, Maxwell Field, Alabama, the following year. Subsequently detailed for duty with the Organized Reserves at Denver, Colorado. From August 1938 to August 1940 served as an instructor at the Air Corps Tactical School. Following this tour of duty, assumed command of a battalion of the 34th Infantry, 8th Infantry Division, Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Between December 1940 and August 1941, served with the Replacement Training Center, Camp Croft, South Carolina, initially as Executive Officer and later Plans and Training Officer. Transferred to the Air Support Command, General Headquarters Air Force, Bolling Field, District of Columbia. With the reorganization of the War Department, assigned to the Air Support Section, Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C. In May 1942 transferred to the 95th Infantry Division, Camp Swift, Texas, as a regimental commander; in July, appointed Assistant Division Commander of the 93d Infantry Division, Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Named Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Forces in the South Pacific Area in December 1942. Returned to the United States in August 1944 to assume command of the 70th Infantry Division, which moved to the European Theater of Operations in December of the same year. Upon the redeployment of the 70th Division, subsequent to VE-day, assumed command of the 94th Infantry Division, August 1, 1945. Inactivated the 94th Infantry Division on February 9, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, N.J. *Decorations:* Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit, Navy; Bronze Star Medal; Commendation Ribbon; Order of the White Lion, Czechoslovakia.

BRIGADIER GENERAL HENRY B. CHEADLE  
ASSISTANT DIVISION COMMANDER

Born at Cannon Falls, Minnesota, May 1, 1891. Graduated from United States Military Academy in 1913. Served with the 28th Infantry from September 1913 to March 1914, at Galveston, Texas. With that regiment participated in expedition to Vera Cruz, Mexico, from March to November 1914. Assigned to border patrol duty from October, 1915 to April, 1916. Detailed aide to Brigadier General E. H. Plummer and served in that capacity until February 1918 in the Panama Canal Zone, the United States, England and France. From October 1918 to September 1921, instructor at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Graduated from the Advanced Course, The Infantry School in June 1922. Served with the 31st Infantry at Manila, P. I., from November 1922 to January 1925, and with the 34th Infantry at Fort Eustis, Virginia, until August 1926. Graduated from the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and assumed command of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry. In November 1928 was ordered to Washington, D. C., for duty with the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff. Served in that capacity until April 1929. From the latter date until April 1930 assigned to the 18th Infantry at Fort Hamilton, New York. Entered the Army War College in August 1930 and graduated the following year. Assigned to the Operations and Training Division, War Department General Staff, for the following three years. Became Military Attaché to Spain and Portugal in November 1938. Transferred to Budapest, Hungary, in the same capacity, in May 1939 and served there until May 1940. Returned to the United States and was assigned to the 18th Infantry at Fort Hamilton, New York. Transferred to the 16th Infantry in July, 1941. Commanded the latter regiment during the original landings in North Africa at Oran. Promoted to brigadier general on December 25, 1942. In April 1943 was named Assistant Division Commander of the 26th Infantry Division, and in August of the same year was assigned to the 94th Infantry Division. *Decorations:* Distinguished Service Medal; Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Legion of Honor, France; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France; Croix de Guerre, Belgium; Order of The White Lion, Czechoslovakia; War Cross, Czechoslovakia; Cross Abdon Calderon, Ecuador.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LOUIS J. FORTIER  
DIVISION ARTILLERY COMMANDER

(CG 94th Infantry Division May 22, 1945 - July 31, 1945)

Born at Gretna, Louisiana, April 8, 1892. Graduated from Tulane University in 1913 with degree in Engineering. From 1913 to 1917 worked as civil engineer. Entered service in Corps of Engineers as a reserve officer in 1917. Appointed second lieutenant, Field Artillery, Regular Army, in 1917. Served with 17th Field Artillery, 2d Division, from August 1917 to September 1918. Instructor in gunnery at Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma until May 1919. From latter date until July 1923 in charge of Field Artillery ROTC at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama. Battery commander in 6th Field Artillery from August 1923 to April 1924. During following two years commanded battery in 24th Field Artillery (Philippine Scouts) at Fort

Stotsenburg, P. I. September 1926 to June 1927 attended Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. From July 1927 to July 1931 held various assignments in the 1st and 18th Field Artillery Regiments. From September 1931 to May 1933 attended Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. From latter date until November 1933 commanded CCC company. Instructor, Pennsylvania National Guard, until August 1935. Attended the Army War College from September 1935 to June 1936. During the following year acted as executive of the 1st Field Artillery Brigade. From June 1937 to May 1939 attended École Supérieure de Guerre, Paris, France. For the following two years Military Attaché to Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Assigned to War Department General Staff and the Combined Chiefs of Staff for the year following termination of duties as military attaché. Promoted to brigadier general in August 1942 and assigned to the 94th Infantry Division as artillery commander. *Decorations:* Distinguished Service Medal; Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal; Star of Karageorge with Crossed Sabers\*, Yugoslavia; White Eagle with Crossed Sabers\*, Yugoslavia; Order of George II with Crossed Sabers\*, Greece; Legion of Honor, France; Croix de Guerre with Palm and Bronze Star, France; Croix de Guerre with Palm, Belgium; Order of the White Lion, Czechoslovakia; War Cross, Czechoslovakia.

COLONEL EARL C. BERGQUIST  
CHIEF OF STAFF

Born at Grand Forks, North Dakota, April 8, 1902. Commissioned second lieutenant, Regular Army, as honor ROTC graduate from the University of North Dakota, in 1927. Served with the 4th Infantry at Fort Lincoln, North Dakota, until May 1930. Then detailed to the 19th Infantry in Hawaii. Served there until 1933. Returned to the United States and organized a CCC company in Florida. Ordered to the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, for the 1933-1934 Regular Officers' Class. Upon graduation entered the Signal School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, for a year's course. In June 1934 ordered to Fort Benning, Georgia, and became a member of the faculty of The Infantry School. After three years in this capacity was designated to attend the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Upon graduation was assigned to the 3d Infantry at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. In January 1940 designated as Executive Officer of the Newfoundland Base Command and served there until December 1941. Ordered to Washington, D. C., and assigned to the New Divisions Activation Branch of the G-1 Section. Served in this capacity until June 1942. Promoted to colonel October 9, 1942, and selected as Chief of Staff of the 94th Infantry Division. *Decorations:* Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France.

COLONEL ROY N. HAGERTY  
CO 301ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

Born at Geneva, Nebraska, July 17, 1895. Commissioned second lieutenant, Infantry, in August 1917. Served with the 59th Infantry, 4th Division, until July 1918. Designated aide-de-camp, Headquarters 8th and 183d Brigades and so served until March 1919. From the latter date until 1922 attached to the

\*Crossed Sabers indicate battlefield action.



ROTC unit at North Dakota State University and Council Bluffs High School. Attended The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, during the latter part of 1922 and the early part of 1923. Until January 1924 served with the 17th Infantry. Following this became instructor with the Iowa and Minnesota National Guard. From 1928 to 1930 served with the 57th Infantry (Philippine Scouts). Completed the Advanced Course at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1931. From graduation until 1933 served with the 11th Infantry, and as a company commander in the CCC. Attended the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1934. For the following two years was instructor at Indiana University. Subsequent assignment was to the 9th Infantry Division. Served as an instructor at The Infantry School and promoted to colonel on December 24, 1941. Assumed command of the 301st Infantry upon its activation. *Decorations*: Silver Star; Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal; Legion of Honor, France; Croix de Guerre with Palm and Bronze Star, France; War Cross, Czechoslovakia; Order of The White Lion, Czechoslovakia; Order of The Fatherland, Russia.

COLONEL EARLE A. JOHNSON  
CO 302D INFANTRY REGIMENT

Born in Neosho, Missouri, March 16, 1893. Graduated from Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, in 1915. Served on the Mexican Border with the Oklahoma National Guard for six months, 1916-1917. Commissioned second lieutenant, ORC, in 1917. Served with the 90th Division in France during World War I and was wounded in action. Commissioned second lieutenant, Infantry, Regular Army, in July 1920. Served with the 34th and 29th Infantry in the United States and with the 35th Infantry in Hawaii. Also, performed two tours of duty as ROTC instructor. Attended The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, 1920-1921. Student at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1938-1939. Upon graduation became infantry instructor and liaison officer at The Quartermaster School, Camp Lee, Virginia. Engaged in this assignment until 1942. Promoted to colonel, December 24, 1941 and assumed command of the 302d Infantry upon activation. *Decorations*: Silver Star; Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal; Purple Heart; Commendation Ribbon; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France; Order of the White Lion, Czechoslovakia; Croix de Guerre, Belgium; Order of The Fatherland, Russia.

COLONEL HAROLD H. McCLUNE  
CO 376TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Born in York, Pennsylvania, June 1, 1894. Enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1911 and assigned to the 13th Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas. Served on Mexican Border from November 1912 until discharged in September 1914. Student until 1917. That month joined the First Officer's Training Camp at Fort Niagara, New York. Commissioned second lieutenant, Infantry, in August 1917. Assigned to the 7th Infantry at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Served with this unit in France through six engagements in World War I and was wounded in action. In August 1919 assigned to the 8th Infantry at Koblenz and remained in Germany until March 1921. Upon returning to the United States served with the 23d Infantry at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, until August 1924. Attended The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, 1924-1925. Following

this served four years as instructor with the Georgia National Guard. Served with the 26th Infantry at Plattsburg Barracks, New York, for the next six years. From 1935 to 1937 commanded the 1st Battalion, 57th Infantry in Manila, P. I. Upon returning to the United States, commanded the 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, until November 1939 when detailed as Senior Instructor to the Puerto Rico National Guard. In November 1940, after the induction of the Puerto Rico National Guard into federal service, detailed Chief of Staff of the Puerto Rico Mobile Force. Promoted to colonel December 24, 1941. Returned to the United States in January 1942 and assumed command of the 144th Infantry stationed at Jacksonville, Florida. In November 1942 assigned to the 94th Infantry Division and took command of the 376th Infantry. *Decorations:* Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster; Bronze Star Medal; Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France, World War I; Croix de Guerre with Palm, France, World War II; Order of The White Lion, Czechoslovakia; Croix de Guerre, Belgium; Order of The Fatherland, Russia.

COLONEL JOHN E. RAY  
DIVISION ARTILLERY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Born at St. Louis, Missouri, March 25, 1895. Joined Missouri National Guard in 1911. Served as an enlisted man, Infantry, on the Mexican Border in 1916. Commissioned second lieutenant, Infantry, ORC, in August 1917. Assigned to National Guard and joined the 139th Infantry, 35th Division, in January 1918. With this organization participated in three campaigns in World War I. Volunteered for the Army of Occupation and assigned to the 53d Infantry Regiment of the 6th Division. Transferred to the Regular Army in 1922. The following year was detailed from Infantry to Field Artillery. Attended The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1921; The Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1925; the Advanced Officers' Course of The Field Artillery School in 1933; the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1941 and a special advanced course at The Field Artillery School in 1942. Promoted to colonel August 3, 1942. Joined the 94th Division prior to activation as Division Artillery Executive Officer. *Decorations:* Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal.

## GLOSSARY

AAA	Antiaircraft Artillery
A&P	Ammunition and Pioneer
AIB	Armored Infantry Battalion
ASP	Ammunition Supply Point
AT	Antitank
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
Burp gun	<i>Schmeisser</i> machine pistol
CCA	Combat Command A
CCB	Combat Command B
CCR	Combat Command Reserve
CG	Commanding General
Chain of command	Normal military channels
CIC	Counterintelligence Corps
CO	Commanding Officer
CP	Command Post
Combat team	Normally an infantry regiment and one field artillery battalion plus engineers, medics and necessary special attachments
CT	Combat Team
DP	Displaced Person
FFI	French Forces of the Interior
FTP	French Partisans (Communist)
G-1	Personnel Officer, division and higher levels
G-2	Intelligence Officer, division and higher levels
G-3	Operations Officer, division and higher levels
G-4	Supply Officer, division and higher levels
G-5	Civil Affairs Officer, division and higher levels
<i>General der Artillerie</i>	General of Artillery
<i>Generalmajor</i>	Brigadier General
HE	High-explosive
H-hour	Time of attack
HMG	Heavy Machine Gun

I&E	Information and Education
I&R	Intelligence and Reconnaissance
IP	Initial Point
<i>Kaserne</i>	Barracks
<i>Konteradmiral</i>	Rear Admiral
<i>Kriegsmarine</i>	German Navy
LD	Line of Departure
LMG	Light Machine Gun
M-1	Garand rifle
MAC	Medical Administrative Corps
Mark III	German medium tank
Mark IV	German medium tank
Mark V	German heavy tank: Panther
Mark VI	German heavy tank: Tiger
MLR	Main Line of Resistance
MP	Military Police
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer
NSDAP	German abbreviation for: National Socialist German Workers' Party
<i>Oberleutnant</i>	First Lieutenant
OD	Olive Drab
OP	Observation Post
Organics	Vehicles organically assigned to a unit
<i>Panzerfaust</i>	German antitank rocket
PW-POW	Prisoner of War
S-1	Personnel Officer, regimental and lower levels
S-2	Intelligence Officer, regimental and lower levels
S-3	Operations Officer, regimental and lower levels
S-4	Supply Officer, regimental and lower levels
<i>Schloss</i>	Castle
<i>Schmeisser</i>	German machine pistol; submachine gun
SCR	Signal Corps Radio

Screaming Meemies	German rockets
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces
SS	Elite Guards
TC	Transportation Corps
TD	Tank Destroyer
TE-21 Inspection	Inspection for completeness of items authorized a given unit by Table of Equipment No. 21
TOT	Time on Target
TWX	Telegram
UK	United Kingdom
V-1	German Buzz bomb
V-2	German super-sonic rocket

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